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Adam Wilson

GEORGE CRABBE'S

Poetical Works:

A PREFACE TO THE TALES.

LIFE

BY

A. C. CUNNINGHAM, ESQ.

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10 3 30

NEW YORK:
THOMAS Y. CROWELL & CO.,
No. 744 Broadway.

PR
V510
D1
1880

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LIFE OF CRABBE.

GEORGE CRABBE was born at Aldborough, a small coast town in Suffolk, on the 24th of December, 1754. His family was obscure, but in competent circumstances—the result of industry and application, and of an aptness for business, which appears to have characterized the race in general. The grandfather of the Poet, who, as far as any genealogical record has determined, was the founder of the race, was at one time engaged in the service of the Government in the department of the Customs. The majority of the Poet's brothers embarked in a seafaring career—in every case with success, but, nevertheless, with somewhat untoward issue. The Poet himself, who was the eldest of his generation, had, oddly enough for the son of a man who could barely read, or who had only been partly self-educated, a preference for learning rather than for physical employments, especially such as coast-cruising. At a very early age George Crabbe was accordingly despatched to school, at a place called Bungay, in order that this literary predisposition, which the father had not failed to observe, might have a fair opportunity of being developed; where, however, it was very nearly smothered by the exemplary method of punishment reserved by the illustrious pedagogue of the Bungay "Establishment for Young Gentlemen." From this academy young Crabbe was removed to one of greater pretensions, when about twelve years old; and under his second tutor, he certainly appears to have acquired considerable attainment.

The natural bent which constituted a poetical turn of mind, with his lively susceptibility, tenderness of heart, simplicity of thought, and correctness of ear, soon assumed the trammels with the music of verse, and he had already perpetrated many a doggrel distich, and even many a creditable effusion. But the object of his enrolment in the second academy was more especially to qualify him for medical honours. It had been determined to bring him up as a surgeon, and, accordingly, upon leaving this school, he was bound in apprenticeship to a country practitioner. But this was not effected without the lapse of one of those indefinite, indeterminate intervals

or idleness, or of favourite pursuit, which often serve to stamp and consolidate the character for good or for evil, and to determine the subsequent career; and it is not unlikely that many of the minor pieces which have been bequeathed to the world as emanating from the pen of Crabbe, may be attributed to this interval, notwithstanding the obnoxious warehouse occupations in which his father employed him from time to time, until, in 1768 (that is, when 14 years old), he was duly apprenticed to a surgeon at an insignificant village near Bury St. Edmund's. The sense of desolation which seems to have accompanied him when removed from home is a circumstance which serves to illustrate the homely, domesticated gentle tenor of his character. Notwithstanding the agreement which had been entered into with the surgeon who was Crabbe's first professional master,—inasmuch as the young Poet was rather employed as a species of errand-boy and servant of all work than as a medical student; and as no indenture had regularly and effectually bound him to this master,—he was, three years later, removed to the care of a surgeon at Woodbridge, to complete his articles; and it was during this portion of his medical apprenticeship that he contracted an intimate acquaintance with Miss Sarah Elmy, a young lady of a similarly literary turn of mind. This acquaintance, which soon assumed the most tender character, gave a new impulse to his versifying predilection. To this period may be traced the multitude of pieces addressed to "Mira"; and it was about the same time that he went so far as to venture upon the publication of his first printed poem, viz. "Inebriety," which was produced at Ipswich.

Hitherto, however, we have only had occasion to mention Crabbe in the half-imaginary—visionary—cloudy—bitter-sweet period of boyhood; and the real life of his career, with its cares, chagrins, crosses, vexations, disappointments, energies, &c., may be dated from about 1775, when he had completed his twentieth year, and when he also completed his apprenticeship. It was then that he returned to Aldborough, in the hope that his father would be able and willing to despatch him to the metropolis, there to complete his professional course. But the elder Crabbe had not means to devote to such a purpose, and, however reluctantly, was compelled to find work in the warehouse for his son, to the infinite disgust of the now refined and delicate George. The consequence was, that the Poet resolved to fling himself upon the world, and to trust to his individual resources. By some means he gathered funds wherewith to proceed to

London, with the object of further pursuing the study of medicine; and, after a sojourn of from six to eight months, in which his scanty means were completely exhausted, he returned to Aldborough with no very bright prospects and anticipations, but shortly contrived to secure a very uneasy situation as assistant to a Mr. Maskill, a surgeon and apothecary of that town. Maskill shortly afterwards left Aldborough, however, to establish himself elsewhere, and poor Crabbe was then driven to attempt the establishment of a business of his own. The study of botany, which had become with him the favourite sister-sport of poesy, now turned to his disadvantage, when it should, in reason, have been most useful, and his predilection for rambles in the world of imagination, conjured before a heated fancy, and encouraged by the latent flame of passion which impelled him in his hopeless pursuit of independence, was no less injurious to the prospects of the professional man. He had, moreover, to overcome the established consideration of a very skilful competitor without having either accurate medical knowledge, skill, or confidence, to recommend him: and with the exception of the winters of 1778 and 1789, when two militia regiments were successively quartered at Aldborough, during which time he managed to secure some practice his first independent professional career at Aldborough may be said to have been a complete failure.

The reciprocal kindness and tenderness which subsisted between Crabbe and Sarah Elmy was, however always present to lend buoyancy and bright hope when his spirits failed. On the one hand she was received and kindly entertained by his father and mother, and she—his own Sarah—was by his bed-side, to tend and nurse him during the whole course of a dangerous illness which attacked him. The little attention or praise received by his first published poem had for some time damped his poetic ardour, but circumstances of peculiar tenderness, as the mortification wore off, revived the latent flame: and, as he gradually seceded from his distasteful profession of medicine, study, and classical study in particular, became more exclusively his occupation.

But there was a deep and growing uneasiness in his mind at the humiliating and dependent position in which his circumstances retained him; and there was also an elevated consciousness of superior capacity, which urged him on to some serious venture; and thus it was that, in the close of the year 1779, notwithstanding his father's remonstrances, he resolved to hazard a literary life in the

metropolis, and to trust to his talents alone for future livelihood, and as the only prospect of constructing for himself a moderate fortune, such as would enable him to marry and settle in life with some prospect of competency. But in this project, again, he appeared likely to be foiled, for his friends could not muster enough to equip and despatch him; and in this dilemma he actually wrote to Mr. Dudley North,—whose connexion with Aldborough consisted in the fact that his brother was at that time a candidate for the representation of the Borough,—to request a temporary loan. The request was so extraordinary, and was made with so much reason and modesty, that Mr. North's subsequent account of the transaction is, that he assented without "a second thought." It is certain that he promptly remitted five pounds, a sum of some consequence in those days, and that, after discharging a few small claims, and making a few provisions, Crabbe embarked in a coasting vessel for London, with about three pounds and some wearing apparel as his sole patrimony; and with a selection of his desultory productions in MS. as his only credentials.

There was, however, one consolatory circumstance which was destined to relieve the intense desolation of his position. Mrs. Burcham, the wife of a linen-draper in Cornhill, had been the early associate and intimate friend of Miss Elmy, and her house was thrown open to him whenever he was willing to avail himself of its hospitality. Wherefore, having taken lodgings close to the Exchange, as was the custom of the time, he resorted to a neighbouring tavern, the meeting-place of several toiling but equally poor men of talent, where he became acquainted with Bonnycastle of mathematical fame, and with Mr. Barrow, whose subsequent services in the employment of the East India Company established a merited reputation.

With the conversation of such acquaintances, and occasional country rambles, diversified with botanical or entomological researches, or devoted to classical study, and with the more regular record of his thoughts in verse, he whiled away his time, until, in 1780, he published his poem called the "Candidate"; but, unfortunately, the poem did not make much way, and the failure of the publisher, Mr. Payne of Pall Mall, completed the disaster and left poor Crabbe penniless, to make fruitless applications for relief to Lord North and Lord Shelbourne in succession, and afterwards also to the Lord Chancellor Thurlow, with no better success. From these repulses he would return for consolation to the journal of his own doings, tenderly dedicated to Sarah Elmy, under the fictitious name of "Mira."

In 1781, however, in the extremity of distress, and on the point of being immured in a debtor's prison, poor Crabbe made one more vigorous effort, which, like that of Bruce, resulted in success. He applied in a long, touching, sensible and deprecatory letter to Edmund Burke, the hero of all that was generous, lofty and classical; and, perhaps to his own surprise that so great a man should have had leisure to consider his petition, he was immediately taken by the hand,—rescued from misery,—became the inmate of Beaconsfield (Burke's favourite country residence and farm), and the admired associate of Burke, Charles J. Fox, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and many of the most illustrious literary men of the day. Crabbe had already a desire to take holy orders, to which also Burke seemed to consider him peculiarly well adapted; and by dint of exerting his own influence, combined with that of Mr. Long and Mr. North, the Bishop of Norwich, Dr. Yonge, was induced to overlook the lack of regular academical courses. The circle in which Burke moved was now as much that of Crabbe also. At the house of Sir Joshua Reynolds our Poet met with Dr. Johnson, upon whom the pure, nervous, undecorated tenor of his writings made much impression. Crabbe was also the especial favourite of Mrs. Burke and her niece, and as the winter season and town residence returned, the Poet took adjacent lodgings, and formed one of the family party at table. The publication of "The Library" now established Crabbe's reputation, and his influential friends exerted themselves to the utmost to promote its sale.

On the 21st of December, 1781, however, after having submitted to an examination, in which he acquitted himself with honour, Crabbe was duly ordained by the Bishop of Norwich, and licensed as Curate to the Rector of the Parish Church of Aldborough (Mr. Bennett). A circumstance which for a time removed him from the circle of his eminent patrons and friends to the less gorgeous, but more sweet and pleasing scenes of his home, his youth, his patrimony, and his love. How pure, how gratifying, how noble, must have been the sentiments of conscious, successful and consecrated rectitude to the once poor, abandoned, profitless exile, on first re-entering the home, the haunts, and the threshold which had last seen him so, as an honoured and honourable man! What must have been the tender, gentle and silent, but proud appreciation and gratification of his true friends and of Miss Elmy in particular! But there was one bitter draught to alloy so much sweetness; his mother,—

the tender, loving, doating mother,—whom he had left already a prey to care and disease, was now no more! At least there was not her bright, exulting and commending glance to greet him.

Very shortly after his appointment to the Curacy of Aldborough (in 1782), George Crabbe was again summoned from home by a flattering letter from Burke, in which this constant patron informed the young Clergyman and Poet, that he had secured for him the private Chaplaincy to the Duke of Rutland, and that that nobleman was prepared to receive and install him in his new office at Belvoir Castle. It must be admitted, however, that notwithstanding the distinguished patronage and the hopes of preferment which he enjoyed, and notwithstanding moreover, the kind consideration and familiar partiality which the Duke manifested towards him, the reserve, ceremony, and all the trammels of a noble establishment, were little in accordance with the retiring inclinations and simple habits of the new Chaplain. It was here, however, that he made the acquaintance of many men of influence and eminence, with whom he ever ingratiated himself by his simplicity and goodness of heart, and by his unassuming demeanour. Amongst such personages may be mentioned in particular, the Duke of Queensberry, the Bishop of Llandaff (Dr. Watson), Dr. Glynn, the Marquis of Lothian, &c.

It was quite at the close of the year 1782, or rather at the beginning of 1783, when the family of the Duke of Rutland proceeded to London for the parliamentary season, that "The Village" was completed,—the MS. of which was first entrusted to Dr. Johnson for perusal and revision, being afterwards published in the month of May of the latter year, and which at last rewarded his toil, by securing a really popular reputation.

The next incidents which characterised his life, were his entry on the boards of Trinity College, Cambridge, by the intercession of Dr. Watson, to graduate without residence; an invitation from Lord Thurlow, at whose entertainment he received the livings of Evershot and Frome St. Quintin, (both small), in Dorsetshire; and his consequent application for the honorary degree of Bachelor of Laws, from the Archbishop of Canterbury, who readily conferred the honour and thereby qualified him at once for his benefices.

The Duke of Rutland being nominated as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland at the close of the year 1783, and Crabbe being little qualified to assume any high ecclesiastical dignity, or being disinclined to remove to too great

a distance from Miss Elmy, or, consequently, to follow his noble patron to Ireland, the Chaplaincy now ceased, with every promise of preferment from the Duke, as soon as any worthy living in his gift should fall vacant.

His means were now adequate to sustain a family in comfort, and therefore the great era which had been the beacon in all his sufferings and difficulties shone brightly upon him, in the early expectation of consummating all his hopes of domestic happiness. It was in December, 1783, that the marriage of George Crabbe to Sarah Elmy was duly solemnized at Beccles: and it was not long before Mr. and Mrs. Crabbe availed themselves of the Duke of Rutland's kind invitation to reside at Belvoir during his absence, and until they had some fixed abode. It was at Belvoir that the first (a still-born) child was delivered; and soon after this occurrence, they removed to the Vicarage of Strathern, near Belvoir, where Crabbe had undertaken to officiate as Curate, and where another child (who survived) was born in 1785, and another again in 1787, and a daughter (who did not survive many months) again in 1789.

During this period we find Crabbe once more appearing amongst the literary men of his day, at least by his publications, however secluded, domesticated and private might have been his social life. It was in 1785 that he published "The Newspaper," which, like "The Library," was received with considerable approbation in literary circles. In the meanwhile, his chief literary productions had consisted of contributions to magazines. After this period, however, he totally secluded himself from the world, and confined his whole attention to his family and to his cures, until the appearance of the "Parish Register" in 1806, revived the recollection of him as a former candidate for literary laurels.

As it may not be superfluous to touch upon the salient points of the private history of our author, during the retirement of his domesticated career, we may mention amongst other incidents, that in 1792 he returned with his wife and family into Suffolk, to re-visit Parham.—the former scene of his courtship,—and the home of his earlier days. But he indeed found Parham sadly altered. Mr. Tovell, his former rough, but hearty and considerate friend, had expired; and he was succeeded by Mrs. Crabbe's mother and a maidenly sister, with no hope of inheritors: so that by the latter Crabbe and his wife were looked upon as interlopers, for the simple reason that they were the next nearest relations of the late proprietor of a handsome estate, which this maiden aunt could only

enjoy for her own natural life, and then only in participation with the mother in-law and grandmother of the heirs presumptive.

During Crabbe's residence at Parham, his chief neighbour and one of his best friends was Mr. Dudley North, at whose house he was frequently entertained in common with many of the most illustrious men of the day, and by whom he was treated with very marked consideration. About this time also he undertook to officiate as Curate at Great Glemham and at Sweffling; and in the early part of the Spring of 1796, the Poet had to deplore the loss of one of his children (viz. his third son) to all of whom he was most dearly attached. A negotiation set on foot with Mr. Hatchard the publisher, in 1799, for the production of a number of Poetical Tales, was thrown aside at the instance of Crabbe's judicious friend and adviser Mr. Richard Turner, the Rector of Sweffling. In 1801 Crabbe removed with his family to Glemham, and in the Summer of 1802 he re-visited Muston, for the last time. The residence at Muston renewed the old associations, and revived the slumbering activity of the Poet's fancy and pen; and the publication of the "Parish Register" re-opened a kind of public correspondence with many eminent writers, amongst whom was Mr Scott, afterwards Sir Walter Scott.

His induction as Minister of Trowbridge on the 3rd of June, 1814, led to a new change of residence The presentation of this living was the fulfilment of the last promise made by his great patron, the previous Duke of Rutland, executed in just observance of the former nobleman's word. Crabbe's latent poetical inclination seems to have been revived, as well indeed as his predilection for the natural sciences. At this period he especially devoted himself to the investigation of fossils.

In 1817 and 1818, the Poet devoted his whole attention to the progress of the last work of any consequence which he bequeathed to the world, namely the "Tales of the Hall," which was accordingly published by Murray in 1819, after the publisher had given £3,000 for the copyright of all of Mr. Crabbe's Works then in circulation. During the latter periods of his literary labours, Crabbe is described as having become less easily abstracted, and consequently compelled to devote the tranquil hours of night to his toil, and to have become less precise in his personal cleanliness, a merit which had hitherto remarkably distinguished him. He appears also to have resorted to very copious snuff taking, to stimulate his less active faculties, and latterly he seems to have been

a prey to acute nervous suffering, probably induced by diminished rest and strained application After the publication of the "Tales of the Hall," we have little further occasion to notice the works of Crabbe; his advanced age had by this time rendered him still less capable of toil, and as years began to weigh upon his constitution, we may recognise the Poet rather as a veteran, honoured for good deeds past, respected for the purity of his character, admired for the lofty independance, scrupulous morality, and Christian benevolence of his principles, and courted, perhaps, as much because he had been the associate of great men, and could convey anecdotes of illustrious personages, and would seem to honour a drawing-room by representing the illustrious there, as for the very decided and distinctive merit of his works. We may meet with him as the acquaintance, companion, or friend of Sir Walter Scott, Lockhart, Jeffrey, Leslie, Bowles, Moore, and of many noblemen recognised as the patrons of letters; and we may pursue him, rather on excursions of pleasure, or in quest of health, than as heretofore,—and in his early days—on fortune-hunting adventures, or in the research of nature, art and learning.

Such continued to be the habits and occupations of Crabbe until the close of the year 1831 and the opening of 1832, when his health, already failing, was precipitately broken by a severe cold, dated about the 26th of January. The illness which followed was too severe to be of long duration, especially with a man of such advanced age; and early in the morning on the 3rd of February, he breathed his last, after a calm, resigned and placid interval.

It is rare that any man "is a prophet in his own country:" and it is still more rare that a rustic population can appreciate the merits of a man like Crabbe, whose talents and acquirements were rather of the classical than of the popular order. But it must be recollected that there are humbler virtues and high Christian qualifications which win the heart, where genius fails to strike the intelligence: and it is certainly amongst the purest tributes to the good qualities of Crabbe, that his parishioners were the first to record their admiration of him, by raising funds amongst themselves for the erection of a worthy monument to his memory.

PREFACE TO THE TALES.

That the appearance of the present work before the public is occasioned by a favourable reception of the former, I hesitate not to acknowledge; because, while the confession may be regarded as some proof of gratitude, or at least of attention, from an author to his readers, it ought not to be considered as an indication of vanity.

But were it true that something of the complacency of self-approbation would insinuate itself into an author's mind with the idea of success, the sensation would not be that of unalloyed pleasure; it would perhaps assist him to bear, but it would not enable him to escape, the mortification he must encounter from censures, which, though he may be unwilling to admit, yet he finds himself unable to confute; as well as from advice, which at the same time that he cannot but approve, he is compelled to reject.

There has been recommended to me an unity of subject, and that arrangement of my materials which connects the whole and gives additional interest to every part. In fact, if not an Epic Poem, strictly so denominated, yet such composition as would possess a regular succession of events, and a catastrophe to which every incident should be subservient, and which every character, in a greater or less degree, should conspire to accomplish.

In a Poem of this nature, the principal and inferior characters in some degree resemble a general and his army, where no one pursues his peculiar objects and adventures, or pursues them in unison with the movements and grand purposes of the whole body.

But if these characters which seemed to be at my disposal were not such as would coalesce into one body, nor were of a nature to be commanded by one mind, so neither on examination did they appear as an unconnected multitude, accidentally collected, to be suddenly dispersed but rather beings of whom might be formed groups and

smaller societies, the relations of whose adventures and pursuits might bear that kind of similitude to an Heroic Poem, which these minor associations of men have in points of connection and importance with a regular and disciplined army.

Allowing this comparison, it is manifest that, while much is lost for want of unity of subject and grandeur of design, something is gained by greater variety of incident and more minute display of character, by accuracy of description and diversity of scene. In one continued and connected poem, the reader is, in general, highly gratified or severely disappointed: by many independent narratives, he has the renovation of hope, although he has been dissatisfied, and a prospect of reiterated pleasure should he find himself entertained.

It may probably be remarked, that Tales, however dissimilar, might have been connected by some associating circumstance to which the whole number might bear equal affinity, and that examples of such union are to be found in Chaucer, in Boccace, and other collectors and inventors of Tales, which, considered in themselves, are altogether independent, and to this idea I gave so much consideration as convinced me that I could not avail myself of the benefit of such artificial mode of affinity. The attempt at union, therefore, has been relinquished, and these relations are submitted to the public, connected by no other circumstance than their being the productions of the same author, and devoted to the same purpose, the entertainment of his readers.

It has been already acknowledged, that these compositions have no pretensions to be estimated with the more lofty and heroic kind of poems; but I feel great reluctance in admitting, that they have not a fair and legitimate claim to the poetic character, and I trust something more of the poetic character will be allowed to the succeeding pages, than what the heroes of the Dunciad might share with the author: nor was I aware that, by describing, as faithfully as I could, men, manners, and things, I was forfeiting a just title to a name which has been freely granted to many, whom to equal, and even to excel, is but very stinted commendation.

In this case it appears, that the usual comparison between Poetry and Painting entirely fails: the artist who takes an accurate likeness of individuals, or a faithful representation of scenery, may not rank so high in the public estimation as one who paints an historical event or an heroic action; but he is nevertheless a painter, and his accuracy is so far from diminishing his reputation,

that it procures for him in general both fame and employment: nor is it perhaps with strict justice determined that the credit and reputation of those verses which strongly and faithfully delineate character and manners, should be lessened in the opinion of the public by the very accuracy which gives value and distinction to the productions of the pencil.

All that kind of satire wherein character is skilfully delineated must (this criterion being allowed) no longer be esteemed as genuine poetry; and for the same reason many affecting narratives which are founded on real events, and borrow no aid whatever from the imagination of the writer, must likewise be rejected

These things considered, an author will find comfort in his expulsion from the rank and society of Poets, by reflecting that men much his superiors are likewise shut out, and more especially when he finds also that men not much his superiors are entitled to admission.

But, in whatever degree I may venture to differ from any others in my notions of the qualifications and character of the true Poet, I most cordially assent to their opinion who assert, that his principal exertions must be made to engage the attention of his readers; and further, I must allow that the effect of poetry should be to lift the mind from the painful realities of actual existence, from its every-day concerns, and its perpetually-occurring vexations, and to give it repose by substituting objects in their place which it may contemplate with some degree of interest and satisfaction: but, what is there in all this which may not be effected by a fair representation of existing character? Fiction itself, we know, and every work of fancy, must for a time have the effect of realities.

Having thus far presumed to claim for the ensuing pages the rank and title of poetry, I attempt no more, nor venture to class or compare them with any other kinds of poetical composition; their place will doubtless be found for them.

TALE I.

THE DUMB ORATORS;

OR,

THE BENEFIT OF SOCIETY.

With fair round belly, with good capon lined,
With eyes severe—
Full of wise saws and modern instances.—*As You Like It*

THAT all men would be cowards if they dare,
Some men we know have courage to declare;
And this the life of many a hero shows,
That, like the tide, man's courage ebbs and flows:
With friends and gay companions round them, then
Men boldly speak and have the hearts of men;
Who, with opponents seated, miss the aid
Of kind applauding looks, and grow afraid;
Like timid trav'llers in the night, they fear
Th' assault of foes, when not a friend is near
In contest mighty, and of conquest proud,
Was *Justice Bolt*, impetuous, warm, and loud;
His fame, his prowess all the country knew,
And disputants, with one so fierce, were few:
He was a younger son, for law design'd,
With dauntless look and persevering mind;
While yet a clerk, for disputation famed,
No efforts tired him, and no conflicts tamed.
Scarcely he bade his master's desk adieu,
When both his brothers from the world withdrew.
An ample fortune he from them possess'd,
And was with saving care and prudence bless'd.
Now would he go and to the country give
Example how an English 'squire should live,
How bounteous, yet how frugal man may be
By a well-order'd hospitality;
He would the rights of all so well maintain,
That none should idle be, and none complain.
All this and more he purposed—and what man
Could do, he did to realize his plan:

But time convinced him that we cannot keep
A breed of reasoners like a flock of sheep;
For they so far from following as we lead,
Make that a cause why they will not proceed.
Man will not follow where a rule is shown,
But loves to take a method of his own;
Explain the way with all your care and skill,
This will be quit, if but to prove he will.—
Yet had our Justice honour—and the crowd,
Awed by his presence, their respect avow'd.
In later years he found his heart incline,
More than in youth, to gen'rous food and wine;
But no indulgence check'd the powerful love
He felt to teach, to argue, and reprove.
Meetings, or public calls, he never miss'd—
To dictate often, always to assist,
Oft he the clergy join'd, and not a cause
Pertain'd to them but he could quote the laws;
He upon tithes and residence display'd
A fund of knowledge for the hearer's aid;
And could on glebe and farming, wool and grain
A long discourse, without a pause, maintain.
To his experience and his native sense
He join'd a bold imperious eloquence;
The grave, stern look of men inform'd and wise,
A full command of feature, heart and eyes,
An awe-compelling frown, and fear-inspiring size.
When at the table, not a guest was seen
With appetite so lingering, or so keen;
But when the outer man no more required,
The inner waked, and he was man inspired,
His subjects then were those, a subject true
Presents in fairest form to public view;
Of church and state, of law, with mighty strength
Of words he spoke, in speech of mighty length:
And now, into the vale of years declined,
He hides too little of the monarch-mind:
He kindles anger by untimely jokes,
And opposition by contempt provokes;
Mirth he suppresses by his awful frown,
And humble spirits, by disdain, keeps down;
Blamed by the mild, approved by the severe,
The prudent fly him, and the valiant fear.
For overbearing is his proud discourse,
And overwhelming of his voice the force;
And overpowering is he when he shows
What floats upon a mind that always overflows.
This ready man at every meeting rose,
Something to hint, determine, or propose;

And grew so fond of teaching, that he taught
Those who instruction needed not or sought:
Happy our hero, when he could excite
Some thoughtless talker to the wordy fight:
Let him a subject at his pleasure choose,
Physic or law, religion or the muse;
On all such themes he was prepared to shine,—
Physician, poet, lawyer, and divine.
Hemm'd in by some tough argument, borne down
By press of language and the awful frown,
In vain for mercy shall the culprit plead;
His crime is past, and sentence must proceed:
Ah! suffering man, have patience, bear thy woes—
For lo! the clock—at ten the Justice goes.

This powerful man, on business, or to please
A curious taste, or weary grown of ease,
On a long journey travell'd many a mile
Westward, and halted midway in our isle;
Content to view a city large and fair,
Though none had notice—what a man was there!

Silent two days, he then began to long
Again to try a voice so loud and strong;
To give his favourite topics some new grace,
And gain some glory in such distant place;
To reap some present pleasure, and to sow
Seeds of fair fame, in after-time to grow:
Here will men say "We heard, at such an hour,
The best of speakers—wonderful his power."

Inquiry made, he found that day would meet
A learned club, and in the very street:
Knowledge to gain and give, was the design;
To speak, to hearken, to debate, and dine:
This pleased our traveller, for he felt his force
In either way, to eat or to discourse.

Nothing more easy than to gain access
To men like these, with his polite address:
So he succeeded, and first look'd around,
To view his objects and to take his ground;
And therefore silent chose awhile to sit,
Then enter boldly by some lucky hit;
Some observation keen or stroke severe,
To cause some wonder or excite some fear.

Now, dinner past, no longer he suppress
His strong dislike to be a silent guest;
Subjects and words were now at his command—
When disappointment frown'd on all he plann'd;
For, hark!—he heard amazed, on every side,
His church insulted and her priests belied;

The laws reviled, the ruling power abused,
The land derided, and its foes excused:—
He heard and ponder'd—What, to men so vile,
Should be his language?—For his threat'ning style,
They were too many;— if his speech were meek,
They would despise such poor attempts to speak:
At other times with every word at will,
He now sat lost, perplex'd, astonish'd, still.
Here were Socinians, Deists, and indeed
All who, as foes to England's church, agreed;
But still with creeds unlike, and some without a creed:
Here too, fierce friends of liberty he saw,
Who own'd no prince and who obey no law;
There were reformers of each different sort.
Foes to the laws, the priesthood, and the court,
Some on their favourite plans alone intent,
Some purely angry and malevolent:
The rash were proud to blame their country's laws;
The vain to seem supporters of a cause;
One cavil'd for change, that he would dread to see;
Another sighed for Gallic liberty!
And numbers joining with the forward crew,
For no one reason—but that numbers do.
"How," said the Justice, "can this trouble rise,
This shame and pain, from creatures I despise?"
And Conscience answer'd—"The prevailing cause
Is thy delight in listening to applause;
Here, thou art seated with a tribe, who spurn
Thy favourite themes, and into laughter turn
Thy fears and wishes: silent and obscure,
Thyself, shalt thou the long harangue endure;
And learn, by feeling, what it is to force
On thy unwilling friends the long discourse:
What though thy thoughts be just, and these, it seems,
Are traitors' projects, idiots' empty schemes;
Yet minds, like bodies, cramn'd, reject their food,
Nor will be forced and tortured for their good!"
At length, a sharp, shrewd, sallow man arose,
And begg'd he briefly might his mind disclose;
"It was his duty, in these worst of times,
T' inform the govern'd of their rulers' crimes:"
This pleasant subject to attend, they each
Prepared to listen, and forbore to teach.
Then voluble and fierce the wordy man
Through a long chain of favourite horrors ran:—
First, of the Church, from whose enslaving power,
He was deliver'd, and he bless'd the hour;
"Bishops and deans, and prebendaries all,"
He said, "were cattle fatt'ning in the stall;

Lothful and pursy, insolent and mean,
Were every bishop, prebendary, dean,
And wealthy rector: curates, poorly paid,
Were only dull;—he would not them upbraid."
From priests he turn'd to canons, creeds and prayers,
Rubrics and rules, and all our Church affairs;
Churches themselves, desk, pulpit, altar, all
The Justice reverenced—and pronounced their fall
Then from religion *Hammond* turn'd his view,
To give our Rulers the correction due;
Not one wise action had these triflers plann'd;
There was, it seem'd, no wisdom in the land;
Save in this patriot tribe, who meet at times
To show the statesman's errors and his crimes.
Now here was Justice Bolt compell'd to sit,
To hear the deist's scorn, the rebel's wit;
The fact mis-stated, the envenom'd lie,
And, staring spell-bound, made not one reply.
Then were our Laws abused—and with the laws,
All who prepare, defend, or judge a cause:
"We have no lawyer whom a man can trust,"
Proceeded Hammond—"if the laws were just;
But they are evil; 't is the savage state
Is only good, and ours sophisticate!
See! the free creatures in their woods and plains,
Where without laws each happy monarch reigns,
King of himself—while we a number dread,
By slaves commanded and by dunces led.
Oh, let the name with either state agree—
Savage our own we'll name, and civil theirs shall be."
The silent Justice still astonish'd sate,
And wonder'd much whom he was gazing at;
Twice he essay'd to speak—but in a cough,
The faint, indignant, dying speech went off:
"But who is this?" thought he—"a demon vile,
With wicked meaning and a vulgar style:
Hammond they call him: they can give the name
Of man to devils.—Why am I so tame?
Why crush I not the viper?"—Fear replied,
"Watch him awhile, and let his strength be tried.
He will be foil'd, if man; but if his aid
Be from beneath, 'tis well to be afraid."
"We are call'd free!" said Hammond—"doleful times,
When rulers add their insult to their crimes;
For should our scorn expose each powerful vice,
It would be libel, and we pay the price."
Thus with licentious words the man went on,
Proving that liberty of speech was gone;

That all were slaves—nor had we better chance
For better times, than as allies to France.
Loud groan'd the Stranger—Why, he must relate,
And own'd, "In sorrow for his country's fate;"
"Nay, she were safe," the ready man replied,
Might patriots rule her, and could reasoners guide·
When all to vote, to speak, to teach, are free,
Whate'er their creeds or their opinions be,
When books of statutes are consumed in flames,
And courts and copyholds are empty names:
Then will be times of joy—but ere they come,
Havock, and war, and blood must be our doom."
The man here paused—then loudly for Reform
He call'd, and hail'd the prospect of the storm;
The wholesome blast, the fertilising flood—
Peace gain'd by tumult, plenty bought with blood:
Sharp means, he own'd; but when the land's disease
Asks cure complete, no med'cines are like these.
Our Justice now, more led by fear than rage,
Saw it in vain with madness to engage;
With imps of darkness no man seeks to fight,
Knaves to instruct, or set deceivers right:
Then as the daring speech denounced these woes,
Sick at the soul, the grieving Guest arose;
Quick on the board his ready cash he threw,
And from the demons to his closet flew:
There when secured, he pray'd with earnest zeal,
That all they wish'd, these patriot-souls might feel;
"Let them to France, their darling country, haste
And all the comforts of a Frenchman taste;
Let them his safety, freedom, pleasure know,
Feel all their rulers on the land bestow;
And be at length dismiss'd by one unerring blow,—
Not hack'd and hew'd by one afraid to strike,
But shorn by that which shears all men alike;
Nor, as in Britain, let them curse delay
Of law, but borne without a form away
Suspected, tried, condemn'd, and carted in a day;
Oh! let them taste what they so much approve,
These strong fierce freedoms of the land they love!"
Home came our hero, to forget no more
The fear he felt and ever must deplore:
For though he quickly join'd his friends again,
And could with decent force his themes maintain,
Still it occurr'd that, in a luckless time,
He fail'd to fight with heresy and crime;
It was observed his words were not so strong,
His tones so powerful, his harangues so long,

As in old times—for he would often drop
The lofty look, and of a sudden stop;
When Conscience whisper'd, that he once was still,
And let the wicked triumph at their will;
And therefore now, when not a foe was near,
He had no right so valiant to appear.
Some years had pass'd, and he perceived his fears
Yield to the spirit of his earlier years—
When at a meeting, with his friends beside,
He saw an object that awaked his pride;
His shame, wrath, vengeance, indignation—all
Man's harsher feelings did that sight recall.
For lo! beneath him fix'd, our Man of Law,
That lawless man the Foe of Order saw;
Once fear'd, now scorn'd; once dreaded, now abhorr'd;
A wordy man, and evil every word:
Again he gazed—"It is," said he, "the same;
Caught and secure: his master owes him shame."
So thought our hero, who each instant found
His courage rising, from the numbers round.
As when a felon has escaped and fled,
So long, that law conceives the culprit dead;
And back recall'd her myrmidons, intent
On some new game, and with a stronger scent;
Till she beholds him in a place, where none
Could have conceived the culprit would have gone;
There he sits upright in his seat, secure,
As one whose conscience is correct and pure;
This rouses anger for the old offence,
And scorn for all such seeming and pretence:
So on this Hammond look'd our hero bold,
Rememb'ring well that vile offence of old;
And now he saw the rebel dared t' intrude
Among the pure, the loyal, and the good;
The crime provoked his wrath, the folly stirr'd his blood.
Nor wonder was it, if so strange a sight
Caused joy with vengeance, terror with delight;
Terror like this a tiger might create,
A joy like that to see his captive state,
At once to know his force and then decree his fate.
Hammond, much praised by numerous friends, was come
To read his lectures, so admired at home;
Historic lectures, where he loved to mix
His free plain hints on modern politics:
Here, he had heard, that numbers had design,
Their business finish'd, to sit down and dine;
This gave him pleasure, for he judged it right
To show by day that he could speak at night.

Rash the design—for he perceived, too late,
Not one approving friend beside him sate:
The greater number, whom he traced around,
Were men in black, and he conceived they frown'd.
"I will not speak," he thought; "no pearls of mine
Shall be presented to this herd of swine;"
Not this avail'd him, when he cast his eye
On Justice Bolt; he could not fight, nor fly:
He saw a man to whom he gave the pain,
Which now he felt must be return'd again;
His conscience told him with what keen delight
He, at that time, enjoy'd a stranger's fright;
That stranger now befriended—he alone,
For all his insult, friendless, to atone;
Now he could feel it cruel that a heart
Should be distress'd, and none to take its part;
"Though one by one," said Pride, "I would defy
Much greater men, yet meeting every eye,
I do confess a fear—but he will pass me by"
Vain hope! the Justice saw the foe's distress,
With exultation he could not suppress,
He felt the fish was hook'd—and so forbore,
In playful spite, to draw it to the shore.
Hammond look'd round again; but none were near
With friendly smile to still his growing fear:
But all above him seem'd a solemn row
Of priests and deacons, so they seem'd below:
He wonder'd who his right-hand man might be—
Vicar of Holt cum Uppingham was he;
And who the man of that dark frown possess'd—
Rector of Bradley and of Barton-west:
"A pluralist," he growl'd—but check'd the word,
That warfare might not, by his zeal, be stirr'd.
But now began the man above to show
Fierce looks and threat'nings to the man below;
Who had some thoughts his peace by flight to see
But how then lecture, if he dared not speak!—
Now as the Justice for the war prepared,
He seem'd just then to question if he dared:
"He may resist, although his power be small,
And growing desperate may defy us all;
One dog attack, and he prepares for flight—
Resist another, and he strives to bite;
Nor can I say, if this rebellious cur
Will fly for safety, or will scorn to stir."
Alarm'd by this, he lash'd his soul to rage,
Burn'd with strong shame, and hurried to engage
As a male turkey straggling on the green,
When by fierce harriers, terriers, mongrels seen

He feels the insult of the noisy train
And sculks aside, though moved by much disdain;
But when that turkey at his own barn-door,
Sees one poor straying puppy and no more,
(A foolish puppy who had left the pack,
Thoughtless what foe was threat'ning at his back.)
He moves about, as ship prepared to sail,
He hoists his proud rotundity of tail,
The half-seal'd eyes and changeful neck he shows,
Where, in its quick'ning colours, vengeance glows;
From red to blue the pendant wattles turn,
Blue mix'd with red, as matches when they burn:
And thus th' intruding snarler to oppose,
Urged by enkindling wrath, he gobbling goes.
So look'd our hero in his wrath, his cheeks
Flush'd with fresh fires and glow'd in tingling streaks,
His breath by passion's force awhile restrain'd,
Like a stopp'd current greater force regain'd;
So spoke, so look'd he, every eye and ear
Were fix'd to view him, or were turn'd to hear.
"My friends, you know me, you can witness all,
How, urged by passion, I restrain my gall;
And every motive to revenge withstand—
Save when I hear abused my native land.
"Is it not known, agreed, confirm'd, confess'd,
That, of all people, we are govern'd best?
We have the force of monarchies; are free,
As the most proud republicans can be;
And have those prudent counsels that arise
In grave and cautious aristocracies;
And live there those, in such all-glorious state,
Traitors protected in the land they hate?
Rebels, still warring with the laws that give
To them subsistence?—Yes, such wretches live.
"Ours is a Church reform'd, and now no more
Is ought for man to mend or to restore;
'T is pure in doctrines, 't is correct in creeds,
Has nought redundant, and it nothing needs;
No evil is therein—no wrinkle, spot,
Stain, blame, or blemish:—I affirm there's not.
"All this you know—now mark what once befell,
With grief I bore it, and with shame I tell:
I was entrapp'd—yes, so it came to pass,
'Mid heathen rebels, a tumultuous class;
Each to his country bore a hellish mind,
Each like his neighbour was of cursed kind:
The land that nursed them, they blasphemed; the laws
Their sovereign's glory, and their country's cause;

And who their mouth, their master-fiend, and who
Rebellion's oracle?————You, caitiff, you!"
He spoke, and standing stretch'd his mighty arm,
And fix'd the Man of Words, as by a charm.
"How raved that railer! Sure some hellish power
Restrain'd my tongue in that delirious hour,
Or I had hurl'd the shame and vengeance due
On him, the guide of that infuriate crew;
But to mine eyes, such dreadful looks appeared,
Such mingled yell of lying words I heard,
That I conceived around were demons all,
And till I fled the house, I fear'd its fall.
"Oh! could our country from our coasts expel
Such foes! to nourish those who wish her well:
This her mild laws forbid, but we may still
From us eject them by our sovereign will;
This let us do."—He said, and then began
A gentler feeling for the silent man;
Ev'n in our hero's mighty soul arose
A touch of pity for experienced woes;
But this was transient, and with angry eye
He sternly look'd, and paused for a reply.
'Twas then the Man of many Words would speak—
But, in his trial, had them all to seek:
To find a friend he look'd the circle round,
But joy or scorn in every feature found:
He sipp'd his wine, but in those times of dread
Wine only adds confusion to the head:
In doubt he reason'd with himself—"And how
Harangue at night, if I be silent now?"
From pride and praise received, he sought to draw
Courage to speak, but still remain'd the awe;
One moment rose he with a forced disdain,
And then, abash'd sunk sadly down again;
While in our hero's glance he seem'd to read,
"Slave and insurgent! what hast thou to plead!"—
By desperation urged, he now began:
"I seek no favour—I—the rights of man!
Claim; and I—nay!—but give me leave—and I
Insist—a man—that is—and in reply,
I speak."—Alas! each new attempt was vain:
Confused he stood, he sate, he rose again;
At length he growl'd defiance, sought the door,
Cursed the whole synod, and was seen no more.
"Laud we," said Justice Bolt, "the Powers above!
"Thus could our speech the sturdiest foe remove."
Exulting now he gain'd new strength of fame,
And lost all feelings of defeat and shame.

"He dared not strive, you witness'd—dared not lift
His voice nor drive at his accursed drift.
So all shall tremble, wretches who oppose
Our Church or State—thus be it to our foes."
He spoke, and, seated with his former air,
Look'd his full self, and fill'd his ample chair;
Took one full bumper to each favourite cause,
And dwelt all night on politics and laws,
With high applauding voice, that gain'd him high applause

TALE II.

THE PARTING HOUR.

——I did not take my leave of him, but had
Most pretty things to say: ere I could tell him
How I would think of him, at certain hours,
Such thoughts and such;—or ere I could
Give him that parting kiss, which I had set
Betwixt two charming words—comes in my father.—*Cymbeline.*

MINUTELY trace man's life; year after year,
Through all his days let all his deeds appear,
And then, though some may in that life be strange,
Yet there appears no vast nor sudden change:
The links that bind those various deeds are seen,
And no mysterious void is left between.

But let these binding links be all destroy'd,
All that through years he suffer'd or enjoy'd:
Let that vast gap be made, and then behold—
This was the youth, and he is thus when old;
Then we at once the work of time survey,
And in an instant see a life's decay;
Pain mix'd with pity in our bosoms rise,
And sorrow takes new sadness from surprise.

Beneath yon tree, observe an ancient pair—
A sleeping man; a woman in her chair,
Watching his looks with kind and pensive air;
Nor wife, nor sister she, nor is the name
Nor kindred of this friendly pair the same;
Yet so allied are they, that few can feel
Her constant, warm, unwearied, anxious zeal;
Their years and woes, although they long have loved
Keep their good name and conduct unreproved;
Thus life's small comforts they together share,
And while life lingers for the grave prepare.

No other subjects on their spirits press,
Nor gain such int'rest as the past distress;
Grievous events, that from the mem'ry drive
Life's common cares, and those alone survive,

Mix with each thought, in every action share,
Darken each dream, and blend with every prayer
To *David Booth*, his fourth and last-born boy,
Allen his name, was more than common joy;
And as the child grew up, there seem'd in him,
A more than common life in every limb;
A strong and handsome stripling he became
And the gay spirit answer'd to the frame;
A lighter, happier lad was never seen,
For ever easy, cheerful, or serene;
His early love he fix'd upon a fair
And gentle maid—they were a handsome pair.
They at an infant-school together play'd,
Where the foundation of their love was laid:
The boyish champion would his choice attend
In every sport, in every fray defend.
As prospects open'd, and as life advanced,
They walk'd together, they together danced;
On all occasions, from their early years,
They mix'd their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears
Each heart was anxious, till it could impart
Its daily feelings to its kindred heart;
As years increased, innumber'd petty wars
Broke out between them; jealousies and jars;
Causeless indeed, and follow'd by a peace,
That gave to love—growth, vigour and increase.
Whilst yet a boy, when other minds are void,
Domestic thoughts young Allen's hours employ'd;
Judith in gaining hearts had no concern,
Rather intent the matron's part to learn;
Thus early prudent and sedate they grew,
While lovers, thoughtful—and though children, true.
To either parents not a day appear'd,
When with this love they might have interfered;
Childish at first, they cared not to restrain:
And strong at last, they saw restriction vain;
Nor knew they when that passion to reprove—
Now idle fondness, now resistless love.
So while the waters rise, the children tread
On the broad estuary's sandy bed;
But soon the channel fills, from side to side
Comes danger rolling with the deep'ning tide;
Yet none who saw the rapid current flow
Could the first instant of that danger know
The lovers waited till the time should come
When they together could possess a home:
In either house were men and maids unwed,
Hopes to be soothed and tempers to be led.

Then Allen's mother of his favourite maid
Spoke from the feelings of a mind afraid:
"Dress and amusements were her sole employ,"
She said—"entangling her deluded boy."
And yet, in truth, a mother's jealous love
Had much imagined and could little prove;
Judith had beauty—and if vain, was kind.
Discreet and mild, and had a serious mind.
Dull was their prospect—when the lovers met,
They said "We must not—dare not venture yet."
"Oh! could I labour for thee," Allen cried,
"Why should our friends be thus dissatisfied?
On my own arm I could depend, but they
Still urge obedience—must I yet obey?"
Poor Judith felt the grief, but grieving begg'd delay
At length a prospect came that seem'd to smile
And faintly woo them, from a Western Isle;
A kinsman there a widow's hand had gain'd,
Was old, was rich, and childless yet remain'd;
"Would some young Booth to his affairs attend,
And wait awhile, he might expect a friend."
The elder brothers, who were not in love,
Fear'd the false seas, unwilling to remove;
But the young Allen, an enamour'd boy,
Eager an independence to enjoy,
Would through all perils seek it,—by the sea,—
Through labour, danger, pain, or slavery.
The faithful Judith his design approved,
For both were sanguine, they were young, and loved
The mother's slow consent was then obtain'd;
The time arrived, to part alone remain'd:
All things prepared, on the expected day
Was seen the vessel anchor'd in the bay.
From her would seamen in the evening come,
To take th' adventurous Allen from his home;
With his own friends the final day he pass'd,
And every painful hour, except the last.
The grieving father urged the cheerful glass,
To make the moments with less sorrow pass;
Intent the mother look'd upon her son,
And wish'd th' assent withdrawn, the deed undone;
The younger sister, as he took his way,
Hung on his coat, and begg'd for more delay:
But his own Judith call'd him to the shore,
Whom he must meet, for they might meet no more;—
And there he found her—faithful, mournful, true,
Weeping, and waiting for a last adieu!
The ebbing tide had left the sand, and there
Moved with slow steps the melancholy pair:

Sweet were the painful moments—but, how sweet
And without pain, when they again should meet!
Now either spoke, as hope and fear impress'd,
Each their alternate triumph in the breast.
Distance alarm'd the maid—she cried, "Tis far!"
And danger too—"it is a time of war:
Then in those countries are diseases strange,
And women gay, and men are prone to change:
What then may happen in a year, when things
Of vast importance every moment brings!
But hark! an oar!" she cried, yet none appear'd—
'T was love's mistake, who fancied what it fear'd;
And she continued—"Do my Allen, keep
Thy heart from evil, let thy passions sleep;
Believe it good, nay glorious, to prevail,
And stand in safety where so many fail;
And do not, Allen, or for shame, or pride,
Thy faith abjure, or thy profession hide;
Can I believe *his* love will lasting prove,
Who has no rev'rence for the God I love?
I know thee well! how good thou art and kind;
But strong the passions that invade thy mind—
Now, what to me hath Allen to commend?"
"Upon my mother," said the youth, "attend;
Forget her spleen, and, in my place appear,
Her love to me will make my Judith dear,
Oft I shall think (such comforts lovers seek),
Who speaks of me, and fancy what they speak;
Then write on all occasions, always dwell
On hope's fair prospects, and be kind and well,
And ever choose the fondest, tenderest style."
She answer'd, "No," but answer'd with a smile.
"And now, my Judith, at so sad a time,
Forgive my fear, and call it not my crime,
When with our youthful neighbours 'tis thy chance
To meet in walks, the visit or the dance,
When every lad would on my lass attend,
Choose not a smooth designer for a friend:
That fawning Philip!—nay, be not severe,
A rival's hope must cause a lover's fear."
Displeased she felt, and might in her reply
Have mix'd some anger, but the boat was nigh,
Now truly heard!—it soon was full in sight;—
Now the sad farewell, and the long good-night:
For see!—his friends come hast'ning to the beach,
And now the gunwale is witnin the reach:
"Adieu!—farewell!—remember!" and what more
Affection taught, was utter'd from the shore.

But Judith left them with a heavy heart,
Took a last view, and went to weep apart.
And now his friends went slowly from the place,
Where she stood still, the dashing oar to trace,
Till all were silent!—for the youth she pray'd,
And softly then return'd the weeping maid.
They parted, thus by hope and fortune led,
And Judith's hours in pensive pleasure fled;
But when return'd the youth?—the youth no more
Return'd exulting to his native shore;
But forty years were past, and then there came
A worn-out man with wither'd limbs and lame,
His mind oppress'd with woes, and bent with age his frame:
Yes! old and grieved, and trembling with decay,
Was Allen landing in his native bay,
Willing his breathless form should blend with kindred clay
In an autumnal eve he left the beach,
In such an eve he chanced the port to reach:
He was alone; he press'd the very place
Of the sad parting, of the last embrace:
There stood his parents, there retired the maid,
So fond, so tender, and so much afraid;
And on that spot, through many a year, his mind
Turn'd mournful back, half sinking, half resign'd.
No one was present: of its crew bereft,
A single boat was in the shallows left;
Sent from some anchor'd vessel in the bay
At the returning tide to sail away;
O'er the black stern the moonlight softly play'd,
The loosen'd foresail flapping in the shade;
All silent else on shore; but from the town
A drowsy peal of distant bells came down:
From the tall houses here and there, a light
Served some confused remembrance to excite:
"There," he observed, and new emotions felt,
"Was my first home—and yonder Judith dwelt;
Dead! dead are all! I long—I fear to know,"
He said, and walk'd impatient, and yet slow.
Sudden there broke upon his grief a noise
Of merry tumult and of vulgar joys:
Seamen returning to their ship, were come,
With idle numbers straying from their home;
Allen among them mix'd, and in the old
Strove some familiar features to behold;
While fancy aided memory:—"Man, what cheer?"
A sailor cried; Art thou at anchor here?"
Faintly he answer'd, and then tried to trace
Some youthful features in some aged face.

A swarthy matron he beheld, and thought
She might unfold the very truths he sought:
Confused and trembling, he the dame address'd:
"The *Booths!* yet live they?" pausing and oppress'd;
Then spake again: — "Is there no ancient man,
David his name? — assist me if you can. —
Flemmings there were — and Judith, doth she live?"
The woman gazed, nor could an answer give;
Yet wond'ring stood, and all were silent by,
Feeling a strange and solemn sympathy.
The woman musing said — "She knew full well
Where the old people came at last to dwell;
They had a married daughter, and a son,
But they were dead, and now remain'd not one."
"Yes," said an elder, who had paused intent
On days long past, "there was a sad event; —
"One of these Booths — it was my mother's tale —
Here left his lass, I know not where to sail:
She saw their parting, and observed the pain;
But never came th unhappy man again:"
"The ship was captured" — Allen meekly said,
"And what became of the forsaken maid?"
The woman answer'd: "I remember now,
She used to tell the lasses of her vow,
And of her lover's loss, and I have seen
The gayest hearts grow sad where she has been;
Yet in her grief she married, and was made
Slave to a wretch, whom meekly she obey'd,
And early buried — but I know no more:
And hark! our friends are hast'ning to the shore.
Allen soon found a lodging in the town,
And walk'd, a man unnoticed up and down.
This house, and this, he knew, and thought a face
He sometimes could among a number trace:
Of names remember'd there remain'd a few,
But of no favourites, and the rest were new:
A merchant's wealth, when Allen went to sea,
Was reckon'd boundless. — Could he living be?
Or lived his son? for one he had, the heir
To a vast business, and a fortune fair.
No! but that heir's poor widow, from her shed,
With crutches went to take her dole of bread.
There was a friend whom he had left a boy,
With hope to sail the master of a hoy;
Him, after many a stormy day, he found
With his great wish, his life's whole purpose, crown'd
This hoy's proud captain look'd in Allen's face, —
"Yours is, my friend," said he, "a woful case;

We cannot all succeed: I now command
The Betsy sloop, and am not much at land;
But when we meet, you shall your story tell
Of foreign parts—I bid you now farewell!"
Allen so long had left his native shore,
He saw but few whom he had seen before;
The older people, as they met him, cast
A pitying look, oft speaking as they pass'd—
"The man is Allen Booth, and it appears
He dwelt among us in his early years:
We see the name engraved upon the stones,
Where this poor wanderer means to lay his bones."
Thus where he lived and loved—unhappy change!—
He seems a stranger, and finds all are strange.
But now a Widow, in a village near,
Chanced of the melancholy man to hear;
Old as she was, to Judith's bosom came
Some strong emotions at the well-known name;
He was her much-loved Allen, she had stay'd
Ten troubled years, a sad afflicted maid;
Then was she wedded, of his death assured,
And much of mis'ry in her lot endured;
Her husband died; her children sought their bread
In various places, and to her were dead.
The once fond lovers met; not grief nor age,
Sickness or pain, their hearts could disengage:
Each had immediate confidence; a friend
Both now beheld, on whom they might depend:
"Now is there one to whom I can express
My nature's weakness, and my soul's distress."
Allen look'd up, and with impatient heart—
"Let me not lose thee—never let us part
So heaven this comfort to my sufferings give,
It is not all distress to think and live."
Thus Allen spoke—for time had not removed
The charms attach'd to one so fondly loved;
Who with more health, the mistress of their cot,
Labours to soothe the evils of his lot.
To her, to her alone, his various fate,
At various times, 'tis comfort to relate;
And yet his sorrow—she too loves to hear
What wrings her bosom, and compels the tear.
First he related how he left the shore
Alarm'd with fears that they should meet no more.
Then, ere the ship had reach'd her purposed course
They met and yielded to the Spanish force;
Then cross th' Atlantic seas they bore their prey,
Who grieving landed from their sultry bay;

And marching many a burning league, he found
Himself a slave upon a miner's ground:
There a good priest his native language spoke,
And gave some ease to his tormenting yoke;
Kindly advanced him in his master's grace,
And he was station'd in an easier place:
There, hopeless ever to escape the land,
He to a Spanish maiden gave his hand;
In cottage sheltered from the blaze of day,
He saw his happy infants round him play;
Where summer shadows, made by lofty trees,
Waived o'er his seat, and soothed his reveries;
E'en then he thought of England, nor could sigh,
But his fond Isabel demanded, "Why?"
Grieved by the story, she the sigh repaid,
And wept in pity for the English maid:
Thus twenty years were pass'd, and pass'd his views,
Of further bliss, for he had wealth to lose:
His friend now dead, some foe had dared to paint
"His faith as tainted: he his spouse would taint;
Make all his children infidels, and found
An English heresy on Christian ground."

"Whilst I was poor," said Allen, "none would care
What my poor notions of religion were;
None ask'd me whom I worshipp'd, how I pray'd,
If due obedience to the laws were paid:
My good adviser taught me to be still,
Nor to make converts had I power or will.
I preach'd no foreign doctrine to my wife,
And never mention'd Luther in my life;
I, all they said, say what they would, allow'd,
And when the fathers bade me bow, I bow'd;
Their forms I follow'd, whether well or sick,
And was a most obedient Catholic.
But I had money, and these pastors found
My notions vague, heretical, unsound.
A wicked book they seized; the very Turk
Could not have read a more pernicious work;
To me pernicious, who if it were good
Or evil question'd not, nor understood:
Oh! had I little but the book possess'd,
I might have read it, and enjoy'd my rest."

Alas! poor Allen—through his wealth was seen
Crimes that by poverty conceal'd had been:
Faults that in dusty pictures rest unknown,
Are in an instant through the varnish shown.

He told their cruel mercy; how at last,
In Christian kindness for the merits past,

They spared his forfeit life, but bade him fly,
Or for his crime and contumacy die;
Fly from all scenes, all objects of delight:
His wife, his children, weeping in his sight,
All urging him to flee, he fled, and cursed his flight.
He next related how he found a way,
Guideless and grieving, to Campeachy-Bay:
There in the woods he wrought, and there, among
Some lab'ring seamen, heard his native tongue:
The sound, one moment, broke upon his pain
With joyful force; he long'd to hear again:
Again he heard; he seized an offer'd hand,
"And when beheld you last our native land!"
He cried, "and in what country? quickly say"—
The seamen answer'd—strangers all were they;
One only at his native port had been;
He, landing once, the quay and church had seen,
For that esteem'd; but nothing more he knew.
Still more to know, would Allen join the crew
Sail where they sail'd, and, many a peril past,
They at his kinsman's isle their anchor cast;
But him they found not, nor could one relate
Aught of his will, his wish, or his estate.
This grieved not Allen; then again he sail'd
For England's coast, again his fate prevail'd:
War raged, and he, an active man and strong,
Was soon impress'd, and served his country long.
By various shores he pass'd, on various seas,
Never so happy as when void of ease.—
And then he told how in a calm distress'd,
Day after day his soul was sick of rest;
When, as a log upon the deep they stood,
Then roved his spirit to the inland wood;
Till, while awake, he dream'd, that on the seas
Were his loved home, the hill, the stream, the trees:
He gazed, he pointed to the scenes:—"There stand
My wife, my children, 'tis my lovely land;
See! there my dwelling—oh! delicious scene
Of my best life—unhand me—are you men?"
And thus the frenzy ruled him, till the wind
Brush'd the fond pictures from the stagnant mind.
He told of bloody fights, and how at length
The rage of battle gave his spirits strength:
'Twas in the Indian seas his limb he lost,
And he was left half-dead upon the coast;
But living gain'd, mid rich aspiring men,
A fair subsistence by his ready pen.
"Thus," he continued, "pass'd unvaried years,
Without events producing hopes or fears."

Augmented pay procured him decent wealth,
But years advancing undermined his health;
Then oft-times in delightful dream he flew
To England's shore, and scenes his childhood knew.
He saw his parents, saw his fav'rite maid,
No feature wrinkled, not a charm decay'd;
And thus excited, in his bosom rose
A wish so strong, it baffled his repose;
Anxious he felt on English earth to lie;
To view his native soil, and there to die.
He then described the groom, the dread he found,
When first he landed on the chosen ground,
Where undefined was all he hoped and fear'd,
And how confused and troubled all appear'd;
His thoughts in past and present scenes employ'd,
All views in future blighted and destroy'd;
His were a medley of bewild'ring themes,
Sad as realities, and wild as dreams.
Here his relation closes, but his mind
Flies back again some resting-place to find;
Thus silent, musing through the day, he sees
His children sporting by those lovely trees,
Their mother singing in the shady scene,
Where the fresh springs burst o'er the lively green;—
So strong his eager fancy, he affrights
The faithful widow by its powerful flights,
For what disturbs him he aloud will tell,
And cry—"'Tis she, my wife! my Isabel!
Where are my children?'—Judith grieves to hear
How the soul works in sorrows so severe;
Assiduous all his wishes to attend,
Deprived of much, he yet may boast a friend;
Watch'd by her care, in sleep, his spirit takes
Its flight, and watchful finds her when he wakes.
'Tis now her office; her attention see!
While her friend sleeps beneath that shading tree,
Careful, she guards him from the glowing heat,
And pensive muses at her Allen's feet.
And where is he? Ah! doubtless in those scenes
Of his best days, amid the vivid greens,
Fresh with unnumber'd rills, where ev'ry gale
Breathes the rich fragrance of the neighb'ring vale,
Smiles not his wife, and listens as there comes
The night-bird's music from the thick'ning glooms?
And as he sits with all these treasures high,
Blaze not with fairy-light the phosphor-fly,
When like a sparkling gem it wheels illumined by?
This is the joy which now so plainly speaks
In the warm transient flushing of his cheeks;

For he is list'ning to the fancied noise
Of his own children, eager in their joys:
All this he feels, a dream's delusive bliss
Gives the expression, and the glow like this.
And now his Judith lays her knitting by,
These strong emotions in her friend to spy;
For she can fully of their nature deem——
But see! he breaks the long protracted theme,
And wakes, and cries—"My God! 'twas but a dream."

TALE III.

THE GENTLEMAN FARMER.

——— Pause then,
And weigh thy value with an even hand:
If thou beest rated by thy estimation,
Thou dost deserve enough.—*Merchant of Venice.*

Throw physic to the dogs. I'll none of it.—*Macbeth.*

Gwyn was a farmer, whom the farmers all,
Who dwelt around, "the *Gentleman*" would call;
Whether in pure humility or pride,
They only knew, and they would not decide.
Far different he from that dull plodding tribe
Whom it was his amusement to describe;
Creatures no more enliven'd than a clod,
But treading still as their dull fathers trod;
Who lived in times when not a man had seen
Corn sown by drill, or thresh'd by a machine:
He was of those whose skill assigns the prize
For creatures fed in pens, and stalls, and sties
And who, in places where improvers meet,
To fill the land with fatness, had a seat;
Who in large mansions live like petty kings,
And speak of farms but as amusing things;
Who plans encourage, and who journals keep,
And talk with lords about a breed of sheep.
Two are the species in this genus known;
One, who is rich in his profession grown,
Who yearly finds his ample stores increase,
From fortune's favours and a favouring lease;
Who rides his hunter, who his house adorns;
Who drinks his wine, and his disbursements scorns;
Who freely lives, and loves to show he can—
This is the Farmer made the Gentleman.
The second species from the world is sent,
Tired with its strife, or with his wealth content:

In books and men beyond the former read,
To farming solely by a passion led,
Or by a fashion; curious in his land;
Now planning much, now changing what he plann'd;
Pleased by each trial, not by failures vex'd,
And ever certain to succeed the next:
Quick to resolve, and easy to persuade—
This is the Gentleman, a Farmer made.

Gwyn was of these; he from the world withdrew
Early in life, his reasons known to few;
Some disappointment said, some pure good sense,
The love of land, the press of indolence;
His fortune known, and coming to retire,
If not a Farmer, men had call'd him 'Squire.

Forty and five his years, no child or wife
Cross'd the still tenour of his chosen life;
Much land he purchased, planted far around,
And let some portions of superfluous ground
To farmers near him, not displeased to say,
"My tenants," nor "our worthy landlord," they.

Fix'd in his farm, he soon display d his skill
In small-boned lambs, the horse-hoe, and the drill;
From these he rose to themes of nobler kind,
And show'd the riches of a fertile mind;
To all around their visits he repaid,
And thus his mansion and himself display'd.
His rooms were stately, rather fine than neat,
And guests politely call'd his house a Seat;
At much expense was each apartment graced,
His taste was gorgeous, but it still was taste;
In full festoons the crimson curtains fell,
The sofas rose in bold elastic swell;
Mirrors in gilded frames display'd the tints
Of glowing carpets and of colour'd prints;
The weary eye saw every object shine,
And all was costly, fanciful, and fine.

As with his friends he pass'd the social hours,
His generous spirit scorn'd to hide its powers;
Powers unexpected, for his eye and air
Gave no sure signs that eloquence was there;
Oft he began with sudden fire and force,
As loth to lose occasion for discourse;
Some, 'tis observed, who feel a wish to speak,
Will a due place for introduction seek;
On to their purpose step by step they steal,
And all their way, by certain signals, feel;
Others plunge in at once, and never heed
Whose turn they take, whose purpose they im-

Resolved to shine, they hasten to begin,
Of ending thoughtless—and of these was Gwyn.
And thus he spake: —
" It grieves me to the soul,
To see how man submits to man's control;
How overpower'd and shackled minds are led
In vulgar tracks, and to submission bred;
The coward never on himself relies,
But to an equal for assistance flies;
Man yields to custom, as he bows to fate,
In all things ruled—mind, body, and estate;
In pain, in sickness, we for cure apply
To them we know not, and we know not why;
But that the creature has some jargon read,
And got some Scotchman's system in his head:
Some grave impostor, who will health insure,
Long as your patience or your wealth endure,
But mark them well, the pale and sickly crew,
They have not health, and can they give it you?
These solemn cheats their various methods choose,
A system fires them, as a bard his muse:
Hence wordy wars arise: the learn d divide,
And groaning patients curse each erring guide.
" Next our affairs are govern'd, buy or sell,
Upon the deed the law must fix its spell;
Whether we hire or let, we must have still
The dubious aid of an Attorney's skill;
They take a part in every man's affairs,
And in all business some concern is theirs;
Because mankind in ways prescribed are found
Like flocks that follow on a beaten ground,
Each abject nature in the way proceeds,
That now to shearing, now to slaughter leads.
Should you offend, though meaning no offence,
You have no safety in your innocence;
The statute broken then is placed in view,
And men must pay for crimes they never knew
Who would by law regain his plunder'd store,
Would pick up fallen mercy from the floor;
If he pursue it, here and there it slides,
He would collect it, but it more divides·
This part and this he stops, but still in vain,
It slips aside, and breaks in parts again;
Till, after time and pains, and care and cost,
He finds his labour and his object lost.
But most it grieves me (friends alone are round),
To see a man in priestly fetters bound;

Guides to the soul, these friends of Heaven contrive,
Long as man lives, to keep his fears alive:
Soon as an infant breathes, their rites begin;
Who knows not sinning, must be freed from sin;
Who needs no bond, must yet engage in vows;
Who has no judgment, must a creed espouse:
Advanced in life, our boys are bound by rules,
Are catechised in churches, cloisters, schools,
And train'd in thraldom to be fit for tools:
The youth grown up, he now a partner needs,
And lo! a priest, as soon as he succeeds.
What man of sense can marriage-rites approve?
What man of spirit can be bound to love?
Forced to be kind! compelled to be sincere!
Do chains and fetters make companions dear?
Pris'ners indeed we bind; but though the bond
May keep them safe, it does not make them fond.
The ring, the vow, the witness, licence, prayers,
All parties known! made public all affairs!
Such forms men suffer, and from these they date
A deed of love begun with all they hate:
Absurd! that none the beaten road should shun,
But love to do what other dupes have done.

"Well, now your priest has made you one of twain
Look you for rest? Alas! you look in vain.
If sick, he comes; you cannot die in peace,
Till he attends to witness your release;
To vex your soul, and urge you to confess
The sins you feel, remember, or can guess;
Nay, when departed, to your grave he goes,
But there indeed he hurts not your repose.

"Such are our burthens; part we must sustain,
But need not link new grievance to the chain:
Yet men like idiots will their frames surround
With these vile shackles, nor confess they're bound;
In all that most confines them they confide,
Their slavery boast, and make their bonds their pride;
E'en as the pressure galls them, they declare,
(Good souls!) how happy and how free they are!
As madmen, pointing round their wretched cells,
Cry, 'Lo! the palace where our honour dwells.'

"Such is our state: but I resolve to live
By rules my reason and my feelings give;
No legal guards shall keep enthrall'd my mind,
No slaves command me, and no teachers blind.
Tempted by sins, let me their strength defy,
But have no second in a surplice by;

No bottle-holder, with officious aid,
To comfort conscience, weaken'd and afraid·
Then if I yield, my frailty is not known;
And, if I stand, the glory is my own.
"When Truth and Reason are our friends, we seem
Alive! awake!—the superstitious dream
Oh! then, fair Truth, for thee alone I seek,
Friend to the wise, supporter of the weak;
From thee we learn whate'er is right and just;
Forms to despise, professions to distrust;
Creeds to reject, pretensions to deride,
And, following thee, to follow none beside."
Such was the speech, it struck upon the ear
Like sudden thunder, none expect to hear.
He saw men's wonder with a manly pride,
And gravely smiled at guest electrified;
"A farmer this!" they said, "Oh! let him seek
That place where he may for his country speak;
On some great question to harangue for hours,
While speakers, hearing, envy noble powers!"
Wisdom like this, as all things rich and rare,
Must be acquired with pains, and kept with care;
In books he sought it, which his friends might view,
When their kind host the guarding curtain drew.
There were historic works for graver hours,
And lighter verse, to spur the languid powers;
There metaphysics, logic there had place;
But of devotion not a single trace—
Save what is taught in Gibbon's florid page,
And other guides of this enquiring age;
There Hume appear'd, and near, a splendid book
Composed by Gay's "good lord of Bolingbroke:"
With these were mix'd the light, the free, the vain,
And from a corner peep'd the sage Tom Paine.
Here four neat volumes Chesterfield were named,
For manners much and easy morals famed;
With chaste Memoirs of females, to be read
When deeper studies had confused the head,
Such his resources, treasures where he sought
For daily knowledge till his mind was fraught:
Then, when his friends were present, for their use
He would the riches he had stored produce;
He found his lamp burn clearer, when each day,
He drew for all he purposed to display:
For these occasions, forth his knowledge sprung,
As mustard quickens, on a bed of dung:
All was prepared, and guests allow'd the praise
For what they saw he could so quickly raise.

Such this new friend: and when the year came round,
The same impressive, reasoning sage was found:
Then, too, was seen the pleasant mansion graced
With a fair damsel—his no vulgar taste;
The neat *Rebecca*—sly, observant, still,
Watching his eye, and waiting on his will;
Simple yet smart her dress, her manners meek,
Her smiles spoke for her, she would seldom speak:
But watch'd each look, each meaning to detect,
And (pleased with notice) felt for all neglect.
With her lived Gwyn a sweet harmonious life,
Who, forms excepted, was a charming wife.
The wives indeed, so made by vulgar law,
Affected scorn, and censured what they saw,
And what they saw not, fancied: said 'twas sin,
And took no notice of the wife of Gwyn:
But he despised their rudeness, and would prove
Theirs was compulsion and distrust, not love;
"Fools as they were! could they conceive that rings
And parsons' blessings were substantial things?"
They answer'd "Yes;" while he contemptuous spoke
Of the low notions held by simple folk;
Yet, strange that anger in a man so wise
Should from the notions of these fools arise;
Can they so vex us, whom we so despise?
Brave as he was, our hero felt a dread
Lest those who saw him kind should think him led;
If to his bosom fear a visit paid,
It was, lest he should be supposed afraid:
Hence sprang his orders; not that he desired
The things when done: obedience he required;
And thus, to prove his absolute command,
Ruled every heart, and moved each subject hand,
Assent he ask'd for every word and whim
To prove that *he alone was king of him.*
The still Rebecca, who her station knew,
With ease resign'd the honours not her due;
Well pleased she saw that men her board would grace
And wish'd not there to see a female face;
When by her lover she his spouse was styled,
Polite she thought it, and demurely smiled;
But when he wanted wives and maidens round
So to regard her, she grew grave and frown'd;
And sometimes whisper'd "Why should you respect
These people's notions, yet their forms reject?"
Gwyn, though from marriage bond and fetter free,
Still felt abridgment in his liberty;

something of hesitation he betray'd,
And in her presence thought of what he said.
Thus fair Rebecca, though she walk'd astray,
His creed rejecting, judged it right to pray,
To be at church, to sit with serious looks,
To read her Bible and her Sunday-books:
She hated all those new and daring themes,
And call'd his free conjectures, "devil's dreams:"
She honour'd still the priesthood in her fall,
And claim'd respect and reverence for them all;
Call'd them "of sin's destructive power the foes,
And not such blockheads as he might suppose."
Gwyn to his friends would smile, and sometimes say
"'Tis a kind fool, why vex her in her way?"
Her way she took, and still had more in view,
For she contrived that he should take it too.
The daring freedom of his soul, 't was plain,
In part was lost in a divided reign;
A king and queen, who yet in prudence sway'd
Their peaceful state, and were in turn obey'd.
Yet such our fate, that when we plan the best,
Something arises to disturb our rest:
For though in spirits high, in body strong,
Gwyn sometimes felt—he knew not what—was wrong;
He wish'd to know, for he believed the thing,
If unremoved, would other evil bring:
"She must perceive, if late he could not eat,
And when he walk'd he trembled on his feet:
He had forebodings, and he seem'd as one
Stopp'd on the road, or threaten'd by a dun;
He could not live, and yet, should he apply
To those physicians—he must sooner die."
The mild Rebecca heard with some disdain,
And some distress, her friend and lord complain:
His death she fear'd not, but had painful doubt
What his distemper'd nerves might bring about;
With power like hers she dreaded an ally,
And yet there was a person in her eye;—
She thought, debated, fix'd—"Alas!" she said,
"A case like yours must be no more delay'd;
You hate these doctors: well! but were a friend
And doctor one, your fears would have an end:
My cousin *Mollet*—Scotland holds him now—
Is above all men skilful, all allow;
Of late a Doctor, and within a while
He means to settle in this favour'd isle;
Should he attend you, with his skill profound,
You must be safe, and shortly would be sound."

When men in health against Physicians rail,
They should consider that their nerves may fail,
Who calls a Lawyer rogue, may find, too late,
On one of these depends his whole estate:
Nay, when the world can nothing more produce,
The Priest, th' insulted priest, may have his use;
Ease, health, and comfort lift a man so high,
These powers are dwarfs that he can scarcely spy;
Pain, sickness, languor, keep a man so low,
That these neglected dwarfs to giants grow:
Happy is he who through the medium sees
Of clear good sense—but Gwyn was not of these.
He heard and he rejoiced: "Ah! let him come,
And, till he fixes, make my house his home"
Home came the Doctor—he was much admired:
He told the patient what his case required;
His hours for sleep, his time to eat and drink,
When he should ride, read, rest, compose, or think
Thus join'd peculiar skill and art profound,
To make the fancy-sick no more than fancy-sound.
With such attention, who cold long be ill?
Returning health proclaim'd the Doctor's skill.
Presents and praises from a grateful heart
Were freely offer'd on the patient's part;
In high repute the Doctor seem'd to stand,
But still had got no footing in the land;
And, as he saw the seat was rich and fair,
He felt disposed to fix his station there:
To gain his purpose he perform'd the part
Of a good actor, and prepared to start;
Not like a traveller in a day serene,
When the sun shone and when the roads were clean;
Not like the pilgrim, when the morning grey,
The ruddy eve succeeding, tends his way;
But in a season when the sharp east wind
Had all its influence on a nervous mind;
When past the parlour's front it fiercely blew,
And Gwyn sat pitying every bird that flew,
This strange physician said—"Adieu! adieu!
Farewell!—Heaven bless you!—if you should—but no
You need not fear—farewell! 't is time to go."
The Doctor spoke; and as the patient heard,
His old disorders (dreadful train!) appear'd:
"He felt the tingling tremor, and the stress
Upon his nerves that he could not express;
Should his good friend forsake him, he perhaps
Might meet his death, and surely a relapse."

So, as the Doctor seem'd intent to part,
He cried in terror—" Oh! be where thou art:
Come, thou art young, and unengaged; oh! come,
Make me thy friend, give comfort to mine home;
I have now symptoms that require thy aid,
Do, Doctor, stay '—th' obliging Doctor stay'd.
Thus Gwyn was happy; he had now a friend,
And a meek spouse on whom he could depend:
But now possess'd of male and female guide,
Divided power he thus must subdivide:
In earlier days he rode, or sat at ease
Reclined, and having but himself to please;
Now if he would a fav'rite nag bestride,
He sought permission—" Doctor, may I ride?"
(Rebecca's eye her sovereign pleasure told)—
" I think you may, but guarded from the cold,
Ride forty minutes."—Free and happy soul!
He scorn'd submission, and a man's control,
But where such friends in every care unite
All for his good, obedience his delight.
Now Gwyn a sultan bade affairs adieu,
Led and assisted by the faithful two:
The favourite fair, Rebecca, near him sat,
And whisper'd whom to love, assist, or hate;
While the chief vizier eased his lord of cares,
And bore himself the burden of affairs:
No dangers could from such alliance flow,
But from that law, that changes all below.
When wintry winds with leaves bestrew'd the ground
And men were coughing all the village round;
When public papers of invasion told,
Diseases, famines, perils new and old;
When philosophic writers failed to clear
The mind of gloom, and lighter works to cheer;
Then came fresh terrors on our hero's mind—
Fears unforeseen, and feelings undefined.
" In outward ills," he cried, " I rest assured
Of my friend's aid; they will in time be cured;
But can his art subdue, resist, control
These inward griefs and troubles of the soul?
Oh! my Rebecca! my disorder'd mind
No help in study, none in thought can find:
What must I do, Rebecca?" " She proposed
The Parish-guide; but what could be disclosed
To a proud priest?—" No! him have I defied,
Insulted, slighted—shall he be my guide?
But one there is, and if report be just,
A wise good man, whom I may safely trust,

Who goes from house to house, from ear to ear,
To make his truths, his Gospel-truths, appear;
True if indeed they be, 'tis time that I should hear:
Send for that man; and if report be just,
I, like Cornelius, will the teacher trust;
But if deceiver, I the vile deceit
Shall soon discover, and discharge the cheat."

To Doctor Mollet was the grief confess'd,
While Gwyn the freedom of his mind express'd;
Yet own'd it was to ills and errors prone,
And he for guilt and frailty must atone.
"My books, perhaps," the wav'ring mortal cried,
"Like men deceive; I would be satisfied;—
And to my soul the pious man may bring
Comfort and light—do let me try the thing."

The cousins met, what pass'd with Gwyn was told.
"Alas!" the Doctor said, "how hard to hold
These easy minds, where all impressions made
At first sink deeply, and then quickly fade;
For while so strong these new-born fancies reign,
We must divert them, to oppose is vain:
You see him valiant now, he scorns to heed
The bigot's threat'nings or the zealot's creed,
Shook by a dream, he next for truth receives
What frenzy teaches, and what fear believes;
And this will place him in the power of one
Whom we must seek, because we cannot shun."

Wisp had been ostler at a busy inn,
Where he beheld and grew in dread of sin;
Then to a Baptists' meeting found his way,
Became a convert, and was taught to pray;
Then preach'd; and, being earnest and sincere,
Brought other sinners to religious fear:
Together grew his influence and his fame,
Till our dejected hero heard his name:
His little failings were a grain of pride,
Raised by the numbers he presumed to guide:
A love of presents, and of lofty praise
For his meek spirit and his humble ways;
But though this spirit would on flattery feed,
No praise could blind him and no arts mislead:—
To him the Doctor made the wishes known
Of his good patron, but conceal'd his own;
He of all teachers had distrust and doubt,
And was reserved in what he came about;
Though on a plain and simple message sent,
He had a secret and a bold intent:
Their minds at first were deeply veil'd; disguise
Form'd the slow speech, and oped the eager eyes;

Till by degrees sufficient light was thrown
On every view, and all the business shown.
Wisp, as a skilful guide who led the blind,
Had powers to rule and awe the vapourish mind;
But not the changeful will, the wavering fear to bind:
And should his conscience give him leave to dwell
With Gwyn and every rival power expel
(A dubious point), yet he, with every care,
Might soon the lot of the rejected share;
And other Wisps be found like him to reign,
And then be thrown upon the world again:
He thought it prudent then, and felt it just:
The present guides of his new friend to trust:
True, he conceived, to touch the harder heart
Of the cool Doctor, was beyond his art:
But mild Rebecca he could surely sway,
While Gwyn would follow where she led the way:
So to do good (and why a duty shun,
Because rewarded for the good when done?)
He with his friends would join in all they plann'd,
Save when his faith or feelings should withstand;
There he must rest sole judge of his affairs,
While they might rule exclusively in theirs.

When Gwyn his message to the teacher sent,
He fear'd his friends would shew their discontent
And prudent seem'd it to th' attendant pair,
Not all at once to show an aspect fair:
On Wisp they seem'd to look with jealous eye,
And fair Rebecca was demure and shy;
But by degrees the teacher's worth they knew,
And were so kind, they seem'd converted too.

Wisp took occasion to the nymph to say,
"You must be married: will you name the day?"
She smiled, —"'Tis well; but should he not comply
Is it quite safe th' experiment to try?"—
"My child," the teacher said, "who feels remorse,
(And feels not he?) must wish relief of course:
And can he find it, while he fears the crime?—
You must be married; will you name the time?"

Glad was the patron as a man could be,
Yet marvell'd too, to find his guides agree;
"But what the cause?" he cried; "'tis genuine love for me."

Each found his part, and let one act describe
The powers and honours of th' accordant tribe:—
A man for favour to the mansion speeds,
And cons his threefold task as he proceeds;
To teacher Wisp he bows with humble air,
And begs his interest for a barn's repair:

Then for the Doctor he enquires, who loves
To hear applause for what his skill improves,
And gives for praise, assent—and to the Fair
He brings of pullets a delicious pair;
Thus sees a peasant, with discernment nice,
A love of power, conceit, and avarice.
Lo! now the change complete: the convert Gwyn
Has sold his books, and has renounced his sin;
Mollet his body orders, Wisp his soul,
And o'er his purse the Lady takes control;
No friends beside he needs, and none attend—
Soul, body, and estate, has each a friend;
And fair Rebecca leads a virtuous life—
She rules a mistress, and she reigns a wife.

TALE IV.

PROCRASTINATION

——Heaven witness
I have been to you ever true and humble.—*Henry VIII.*

——The fatal time
Cuts off all ceremonies and vows of love,
And ample interchange of sweet discourse,
Which so long sundered friends should dwell upon.
Richard III.

Love will expire—the gay, the happy dream
Will turn to scorn, indifference, or esteem:
Some favour'd pairs, in this exchange, are blest
Nor sigh for raptures in a state of rest;
Others, ill-match'd, with minds unpair'd, repent
At once the deed, and know no more content.
From joy to anguish they, in haste, decline,
And, with their fondness, their esteem resign;
More luckless still their fate, who are the prey
Of long-protracted hope and dull delay:
'Mid plans of bliss the heavy hours pass on,
Till love is wither'd, and till joy is gone.
This gentle flame two youthful hearts possess'd,
The sweet disturber of unenvied rest:
The prudent *Dinah* was the maid beloved,
And the kind *Rupert* was the swain approved:
A wealthy Aunt her gentle niece sustain'd
He, with a father, at his desk remain'd,
The youthful couple to their vows sincere,
Thus loved expectant; year succeeding year,
With pleasant views and hopes but not a prospect near.
Rupert some comfort in his station saw,
But the poor virgin lived in dread and awe;
Upon her anxious looks the widow smiled,
And bade her wait, "for she was yet a child."
She for her neighbour had a due respect,
Nor would his son encourage or reject;

And thus the pair, with expectations vain,
Beheld the seasons change and change again:
Meantime the nymph her tender tales perused,
Where cruel aunts impatient girls refused:
While hers, though teasing, boasted to be kind,
And she, resenting, to be all resign'd.

The dame was sick, and when the youth applied
For her consent, she groan'd, and cough'd and cried
Talk'd of departing, and again her breath
Drew hard, and cough'd, and talk'd again of death:
"Here you may live, my Dinah! here the boy
And you together my estate enjoy:"
Thus to the lovers was her mind express'd,
Till they forbore to urge the fond request

Servant, and nurse, and comforter, and friend,
Dinah had still some duty to attend;
But yet their walk, when Rupert's evening call
Obtain'd an hour, made sweet amends for all:
So long they now each other's thoughts had known,
That nothing seem'd exclusively their own:
But with the common wish, the mutual fear,
They now had travell'd to their thirtieth year.

At length a prospect open'd—but alas!
Long time must yet, before the union, pass:
Rupert was call'd in other clime, t' increase
Another's wealth, and toil for future peace.
Loth were the lovers; but the aunt declared
'Twas fortune's call, and they must be prepared:
"You now are young, and for this brief delay,
And Dinah's care, what I bequeath will pay,
All will be yours; nay, love, suppress that sigh;
The kind must suffer and the best must die:"
Then came the cough, and strong the signs it gave
Of holding long contention with the grave.

The lovers parted with a gloomy view,
And little comfort, but that both were true;
He for uncertain duties doom'd to steer,
While hers remain'd too certain and severe.

Letters arrived, and Rupert fairly told
"His cares were many, and his hopes were cold:
The view more clouded, that was never fair,
And love alone preserved him from despair:"
In other letters brighter hopes he drew,
"His friends were kind, and he believed them true."

When the sage widow Dinah's grief descried,
She wonder'd much why one so happy sigh'd:
Then bade her see how her poor aunt sustain'd
The ills of life, nor murmur'd nor complain'd.

To vary pleasures, from the lady's chest
Were drawn the pearly string and tabby vest;
Beads, jewels, laces, all their value shown,
With the kind notice—"They will be your own."
This hope, these comforts, cherish'd day by day,
To Dinah's bosom made a gradual way;
Till love of treasure had as large a part,
As love of Rupert, in the virgin's heart,
Whether it be that tender passions fail,
From their own nature, while the strong prevail:
Or whether av'rice, like the poison-tree,
Kills all beside it, and alone will be;
Whatever cause prevail'd, the pleasure grew
In Dinah's soul,—she loved the hoards to view;
With lively joys those comforts she survey'd,
And love grew languid in the careful maid.
Now the grave niece partook the widow's cares,
Look'd to the great, and ruled the small affairs:
Saw clean'd the plate, arranged the china-show,
And felt her passion for a shilling grow:
Th' indulgent aunt increased the maid's delight,
By placing tokens of her wealth in sight;
She loved the value of her bonds to tell,
And spake of stocks, and how they rose and fell.
This passion grew, and gain'd at length such sway
That other passions shrank to make it way;
Romantic notions now the heart forsook,
She read but seldom, and she changed her book;
And for the verses she was wont to send,
Short was her prose, and she was Rupert's friend.
Seldom she wrote, and then the widow's cough,
And constant call excused her breaking off;
Who, now oppressed, no longer took the air,
But sat and dozed upon an easy chair.
The cautious doctor saw the case was clear,
But judged it best to have companions near;
They came, they reason'd, they prescribed,—at last
Like honest men, they said their hopes were past;
Then came a priest—'tis comfort to reflect,
When all is over, there was no neglect:
And all was over—By her husband's bones,
The widow rests beneath the sculptured stones,
That yet record their fondness and their fame,
While all they left, the virgin's care became:
Stock, bonds, and buildings;—it disturb'd her rest,
To think what load of troubles she possess'd:
Yet, if a trouble, she resolved to take
Th' important duty for the donor's sake;

She too was heiress to the widow's taste,
Her love of hoarding, and her dread of waste.
Sometimes the past would on her mind intrude,
And then a conflict full of care ensued;
The thoughts of Rupert on her mind would press,
His worth she knew, but doubted his success:
Of old she saw him heedless; what the boy
Forbore to save, the man would not enjoy;
Oft had he lost the chance that care would seize,
Willing to live, but more to live at ease:
Yet could she not a broken vow defend,
And Heav'n, perhaps, might yet enrich her friend.
Month after month was pass'd, and all were spent
In quiet comfort and in rich content:
Miseries there were, and woes the world around,
But these had not her pleasant dwelling found;
She knew that mothers grieved, and widows wept,
And she was sorry, said her prayers, and slept:
Thus pass'd the seasons, and to Dinah's board
Gave what the seasons to the rich afford;
For she indulged, nor was her heart so small,
That one strong passion should engross it all.
A love of splendour now with av'rice strove,
And oft appear'd to be the stronger love:
A secret pleasure fill'd the Widow's breast,
When she reflected on the hoards possess'd;
But livelier joy inspired th' ambitious Maid,
When she the purchase of those hoards display'd:
In small but splendid room she loved to see
That all was placed in view and harmony;
There, as with eager glance she look'd around,
She much delight in every object found;
While books devout were near her—to destroy,
Should it arise, an overflow of joy.
Within that fair apartment guests might see
The comforts cull'd for wealth by vanity:
Around the room an Indian paper blazed,
With lively tint and figures boldly raised;
Silky and soft upon the floor below,
Th' elastic carpet rose with crimson glow;
All things around implied both cost and care,
What met the eye was elegant or rare:
Some curious trifles round the room were laid,
By hope presented to the wealthy Maid;
Within a costly case of varnish'd wood,
In level rows, her polish'd volumes stood:
Shown as a favour to a chosen few,
To prove what beauty for a book could do:

A silver urn with curious work was fraught;
A silver lamp from Grecian pattern wrought:
Above her head, all gorgeous to behold,
A time-piece stood on feet of burnish'd gold;
A stag's-head crest adorn'd the pictured case,
Through the pure crystal shone the enamell'd face;
And while on brilliants moved the hands of steel,
It click'd from pray'r to pray'r, from meal to meal.

Here as the lady sate, a friendly pair
Stept in t' admire the view, and took their chair:
They then related how the young and gay
Were thoughtless wandering in the broad highway:
How tender damsels sail'd in tilted boats,
And laugh'd with wicked men in scarlet coats;
And how we live in such degen'rate times,
That men conceal their wants, and show their crimes;
While vicious deeds are screen'd by fashion's name,
And what was once our pride is now our shame.

Dinah was musing, as her friends discoursed,
When these last words a sudden entrance forced
Upon her mind, and what was once her pride
And now her shame, some painful views supplied!
Thoughts of the past within her bosom press'd,
And there a change was felt, and was confess'd:
While thus the Virgin strove with secret pain,
Her mind was wandering o'er the troubled main:
Still she was silent, nothing seem'd to see,
But sate and sigh'd in pensive reverie.

The friends prepared new subjects to begin,
When tall Susannah, maiden starch, stalk'd in!
Not in her ancient mode, sedate and slow,
As when she came, the mind she knew, to know;
Nor as, when list'ning half an hour before,
She twice or thrice tapp'd gently at the door;
But, all decorum cost in wrath aside,
"I think the devil's in the man!" she cried;
"A huge tall sailor, with his tawny cheek,
And pitted face, will with my lady speak;
He grinn'd an ugly smile, and said he knew,
Please you, my lady, 't would be joy to you:
What must I answer?"—Trembling and distress'd
Sank the pale Dinah by her fears oppress'd;
When thus alarm'd, and brooking no delay,
Swift to her room the stranger made his way.

Revive, my love!" said he, "I've done thee harm,
Give me thy pardon," and he look'd alarm:
Meantime the prudent Dinah had contrived
Her soul to question, and she then revived.

"See! my good friend," and then she raised her head
"The bloom of life, the strength of youth is fled,
Living we die: to us the world is dead;
We parted bless'd with health, and I am now
Age-struck and feeble—so I find art thou:
Thine eye is sunken, furrow'd is thy face,
And downward look'st thou—so we run our race;
And happier they whose race is nearly run,
Their troubles over, and their duties done."
"True, lady, true—we are not girl and boy,
But time has left us something to enjoy."
"What hast thou learn'd my fortune?—yes, I live
To feel how poor the comforts wealth can give:
Thou too perhaps are wealthy; but our fate
Still mocks our wishes, wealth is come too late."
"To me nor late nor early: I am come
Poor as I left thee to my native home:"
Nor yet," said Rupert, "will I grieve; 't is mine,
To share thy comforts, and the glory thine;
For thou wilt gladly take that generous part
That both exalts and gratifies the heart;
While mine rejoices"—"Heavens!" return'd the maid
This talk to one so wither'd and decay'd?
No! all my care is now to fit my mind
For other spousal, and to die resign'd:
As friend and neighbour, I shall hope to see
These noble views, this pious love in thee;
That we together may the change await,
Guides and spectators in each other's fate;
When, fellow-pilgrims, we shall daily crave
The mutual prayer that arms us for the grave."
Half angry, half in doubt, the lover gazed
On the meek maiden, by her speech amazed;
"Dinah," said he, "dost thou respect thy vows?
What spousal mean'st thou?—thou art Rupert's spouse
The chance is mine to take, and thine to give;
But, trifling this, if we together live.
Can I believe, that, after all the past,
Our vows, our loves, thou wilt be false at last?
Something thou hast—I know not what—in view;
I find thee pious—let me find thee true."
"Ah! cruel this; but do, my friend, depart;
And to its feelings leave my wounded heart."
"Nay, speak at once; and Dinah, let me know,
Mean'st thou to take me, now I'm wreck'd, in tow
Be fair; nor longer keep me in the dark;
Am I forsaken for a trimmer spark?
Heaven's spouse thou art not: nor can I believe
That God accepts her who will man deceive:

True I am shatter'd, I have service seen,
And service done, and have in trouble been;
My cheek (it shames me not) has lost its red,
And the brown buff is o'er my features spread,
Perchance my speech is rude; for I among
Th' untamed have been, in temper and in tongue;
Have been trepann'd, have lived in toil and care,
And wrought for health I was not doom'd to share;
It touch'd me deeply, for I felt a pride
In gaining riches for my destined bride:
Speak then my fate; for these my sorrows past.
Time lost, youth fled, hope wearied, and at last
This doubt of thee—a childish thing to tell,
But certain truth—my very throat they swell;
They stop the breath, and but for shame could I
Give way to weakness, and with passion cry;
These are unmanly struggles, but I feel
This hour must end them, and perhaps will heal."
Here Dinah sigh'd, as if afraid to speak—
And then repeated—"They were frail and weak;
His soul she lov'd, and hoped he had the grace
To fix his thoughts upon a better place."
She ceased;—with steady glance, as if to see
The very root of this hypocrisy,—
He her small fingers moulded in his hard,
And bronzed broad hand; then told her his regard;
His best respect were gone, but love had still
Hold in his heart, and govern'd yet the will—
Or he would curse her:—saying this, he threw
The hand in scorn away, and bade adieu
To every lingering hope, with every care in view
Proud and indignant, suffering, sick, and poor,
He grieved unseen: and spoke of love no more—
Till all he felt in indignation died,
As hers had sunk in avarice and pride.
In health declining as in mind distress'd,
To some in power his troubles he confess'd,
And shares a parish-gift;—at prayers he sees
The pious Dinah dropp'd upon her knees;
Thence as she walks the street with stately air
As chance directs, oft meet the parted pair;
When he, with thickest coat of badge-man's blue
Moves near her shaded silk of changeful hue;
When his thin locks of grey approach her braid,
A costly purchase made in beauty's aid;
When his frank air, and his unstudied pace
Are seen with her soft manner, air, and grace,
And his plain artless look with her sharp meaning face;

It might some wonder in a stranger move,
How these together could have talk'd of love.
Behold them now!—see there a tradesman stands,
And humbly hearkens to some fresh commands;
He moves to speak, she interrupts him—"Stay,"
Her air expresses—"Hark! to what I say:"
Ten paces off, poor Rupert on a seat
Has taken refuge from the noon-day heat,
His eyes on her intent, as if to find
What were the movements of that subtle mind:
How still! how earnest is he!—it appears
His thoughts are wand'ring through his earlier years;
Through years of fruitless labour, to the day
When all his earthly prospects died away:
"Had I," he thinks, "been wealthier of the two,
Would she have found me so unkind, untrue?
Or knows not man when poor, what man when rich will do!
Yes, yes! I feel that I had faithful proved,
And should have soothed and raised her, bless'd and loved."
But Dinah moves—she had observed before,
The pensive Rupert at an humble door:
Some thoughts of pity raised by his distress,
Some feeling touch of ancient tenderness;
Religion, duty urged the maid to speak,
In terms of kindness to a man so weak:
But pride forbad, and to return would prove
She felt the shame of his neglected love;
Nor wrapp'd in silence could she pass, afraid
Each eye should see her, and each heart upbraid;
One way remain'd—the way the Levite took,
Who without mercy could on misery look;
(A way perceived by craft, approved by pride),
She cross'd and pass'd him on the other side.

TALE V.

THE PATRON.

> Poor wretches, that depend
> On greatness' favours, dream as I have done,—
> Wake and find nothing. *Cymbeline.*

A BOROUGH-BAILIFF, who to law was train'd,
A wife and sons in decent state maintain'd;
He had his way in life's rough ocean steer'd,
And many a rock and coast of danger clear'd;
He saw where others fail'd, and care had he,
Others in him should not such failings see:
His sons in various busy states were placed,
And all began the sweets of gain to taste,
Save *John* the younger, who, of sprightly parts,
Felt not a love for money-making arts:
In childhood feeble, he, for country air,
Had long resided with a rustic pair;
All round whose room were doleful ballads, songs,
Of lovers' sufferings and of ladies' wrongs;
Of peevish ghosts who came at dark midnight,
For breach of promise guilty men to fright;
Love, marriage, murder, were the themes, with these,
All that on idle, ardent spirits seize;
Robbers at land and pirates on the main,
Enchanters foil'd, spells broken, giants slain;
Legends of love, with tales of halls and bowers,
Choice of rare songs, and garlands of choice flowers,
And all the hungry mind without a choice devours.
From village-children kept apart by pride,
With such enjoyments, and without a guide,
Inspired by feelings all such works infused
John snatch'd a pen, and wrote as he perused.
With the like fancy he could make his knight
Slay half a host, and put the rest to flight:
With the like knowledge he could make him ride
From isle to isle at *Parthenissa's* side:
And with a heart yet free, no busy brain
Form'd wilder notions of delight and pain.
The raptures smiles create, the anguish of disdain

Such were the fruits of John's poetic toil,
Weeds, but still proofs of vigour in the soil;
He nothing purposed but with vast delight,
Let Fancy loose, and wonder'd at her flight:
His notions of poetic worth were high,
And of his own still-hoarded poetry;—
These to his father's house he bore with pride,
A miser's treasure, in his room to hide;
Till spurr'd by glory, to a reading friend
He kindly show'd the sonnets he had penn'd.
With erring judgment, though with heart sincere,
That friend exclaim'd, "These beauties must appear."
In magazines they claim'd their share of fame,
Though undistinguish'd by their author's name;
And with delight the young enthusiast found
The muse of Marcus with applauses crown'd.
This heard the father, and with some alarm;
"The boy," said he, "will neither trade nor farm;
He for both law and physic is unfit,
Wit he may have, but cannot live on wit:
Let him his talents then to learning give
Where verse is honour'd, and where poets live."
John kept his terms at college unreproved,
Took his degree, and left the life he loved;
Not yet ordain'd, his leisure he employ'd
In the light labours he so much enjoy'd;
His favourite notions and his daring views
Were cherish'd still, and he adored the Muse.
"A little time, and he should burst to light,
And admiration of the world excite;
And every friend, now cool and apt to blame
His fond pursuit, would wonder at his fame."
When led by fancy, and from view retired,
He call'd before him all his heart desired;
"Fame shall be mine, then wealth shall I possess,
And beauty next an ardent lover bless;
For me the maid shall leave her nobler state,
Happy to raise and share her poet's fate."
He saw each day his father's frugal board,
With simple fare by cautious prudence stored:
Where each indulgence was foreweigh'd with care,
And the grand maxims were to save and spare:
Yet in his walks, his closet, and his bed,
All frugal cares and prudent counsels fled;
And bounteous Fancy, for his glowing mind,
Wrought various scenes, and all of glorious kind:
Slaves of the *ring* and *lamp!* what need of you
When Fancy's self such magic deeds can do?

Though rapt in visions of no vulgar kind,
To common subjects stoop'd our poet's mind;
And oft when wearied with more ardent flight,
He felt a spur satiric song to write;
A rival burgess his bold Muse attack'd,
And whipp'd severely for a well known fact;
For while he seem'd to all demure and shy,
Our poet gazed at what was passing by;
And ev'n his father smiled when playful wit,
From his young bard, some haughty object hit.
From ancient times, the borough where they dwelt
Had mighty contest at elections felt:
Sir Godfrey Ball, tis true, had held in pay
Electors many for the trying day;
But in such golden chains to bind them all
Required too much for e'en Sir Godfrey Ball.
A member died, and to supply his place,
Two heroes enter'd for th' important race;
Sir Godfrey's friend and Earl Fitzdonnel's son,
Lord Frederick Damer, both prepared to run;
And partial numbers saw with vast delight
Their good young lord oppose the proud old knight.
Our poet's father, at a first request,
Gave the young lord his vote and interest;
And what he could our poet, for he stung
The foe by verse satiric, said and sung.
Lord Frederick heard of all this youthful zeal,
And felt as lords upon a canvass feel.
He read the satire, and he saw the use
That such cool insult, and such keen abuse,
Might on the wavering minds of voting men produce
Then too his praises were in contrast seen,
"A lord as noble as the knight was mean."
"I much rejoice," he cried, "such worth to find;
To this the world must be no longer blind:
His glory will descend from sire to son,
The Burns of English race, the happier Chatterton."
Our poet's mind, now hurried and elate,
Alarm's the anxious parent for his fate;
Who saw with sorrow, should their friend succeed,
That much discretion would the poet need.
Their friend succeeded, and repaid the zeal
The poet felt, and made opposers feel,
By praise (from lords how soothing and how sweet!)
And invitation to his noble seat.
The father ponder'd, doubtful if the brain
Of his proud boy such honour could sustain;
Pleased with the favours offer'd to a son,
But seeing dangers few so ardent shun.

Thus, when they parted, to the youthful breast
The father's fears were by his love impress'd:
"There will you find, my son, the courteous ease
That must subdue the soul it means to please;
That soft attention which ev'n beauty pays
To wake our passions, or provoke our praise:
There all the eye beholds will give delight,
Where every sense is flattered like the sight:
This is your peril; can you from such scene
Of splendour part, and feel your mind serene,
And in the father's humble state resume
The frugal diet and the narrow room?"
To this the youth with cheerful heart replied,
Pleased with the trial, but as yet untried;
And while professing patience, should he fail,
He suffer'd hope o'er reason to prevail.

Impatient, by the morning mail convey'd,
The happy guest his promised visit paid;
And now arriving at the Hall, he tried
For air composed, serene and satisfied;
As he had practiced in his room alone,
And there acquired a free and easy tone;
There he had said, "Whatever the degree
A man obtains, what more than man is he?"
And when arrived—"This room is but a room,
Can aught we see the steady soul o'ercome?
Let me in all a manly firmness show,
Upheld by talents, and their value know."
This reason urged; but it surpass'd his skill
To be in act as manly as in will;
When he his Lordship and the Lady saw,
Brave as he was, he felt oppress'd with awe;
And spite of verse, that so much praise had won,
The poet found he was the Bailiff's son.

But dinner came, and the succeeding hours
Fix'd his week nerves, and raised his failing powers:
Praised and assured, he ventured once or twice
On some remark, and bravely broke the ice;
So that at night, reflecting on his words,
He found, in time, he might converse with lords.

Now was the Sister of his Patron seen—
A lovely creature, with majestic mien:
Who, softly smiling while she look'd so fair,
Praised the young poet with such friendly air;
Such winning frankness in her looks express'd,
And such attention to her brother's guest;
That so much beauty, join'd with speech so kind,
Raised strong emotions in the poet's mind;

Till reason fail'd his bosom to defend,
From the sweet power of this enchanting friend.—
Rash boy! what hope thy frantic mind invades?
What love confuses, and what pride persuades?
Awake to truth! shouldst thou deluded feed
On hopes so groundless, thou art mad indeed.
What say'st thou, wise one? "that all powerful Love
Can fortune's strong impediments remove;
Nor is it strange that worth should wed to worth,
The pride of genius with the pride of birth."
While thou art dreaming thus, the Beauty spies
Love in thy tremour, passion in thine eyes;
And with th' amusement pleased, of conquest vain
She seeks her pleasure, careless of thy pain:
She gives the praise to humble and confound,
Smiles to ensnare, and flatters thee to wound.
Why has she said that in the lowest state
The noble mind ensures a noble fate?
And why thy daring mind to glory call?
That thou may'st dare and suffer, soar and fall.
Beauties are tyrants, and if they can reign
They have no feeling for their subjects pain;
Their victim's anguish gives their charms applause,
And their chief glory is the woe they cause:
Something of this was felt, in spite of love,
Which hope in spite of reason, would remove.
Thus lived our youth, with conversation, books,
And Lady Emma's soul-subduing looks;
Lost in delight, astonish'd at his lot,
All prudence banish'd, all advice forgot—
Hopes, fears, and every thought, were fix'd upon the spot
'T was autumn yet, and many a day must frown
On Brandon-Hall, ere went my Lord to town;
Meantime the father, who had heard his boy
Lived in a round of luxury and joy,
And justly thinking that the youth was one,
Who, meeting danger, was unskill'd to shun;
Knowing his temper, virtue, spirit, zeal,
How prone to hope and trust, believe and feel;
These on the parent's soul their weight impress'd,
And thus he wrote the counsels of his breast:—
"John, thou'rt a genius; thou hast some pretence,
I think, to wit,—but hast thou sterling sense?
That which, like gold, may through the world go forth,
And always pass for what 't is truly worth;
Whereas this genius, like a bill, must take
Only the value our opinions make.
"Men famed for wit, of dangerous talents vain
Treat those of common parts with proud disdain,

The powers that wisdom would, improving, hide,
They blaze abroad with inconsid'rate pride;
While yet but mere probationers for fame,
They seize the honour they should then disclaim:
Honour so hurried to the light must fade,
The lasting laurels flourish in the shade.

"Genius is jealous: I have heard of some.
Who, if unnoticed, grew perversely dumb;
Nay, different talents would their envy raise;
Poets have sicken'd at a dancer's praise;
And one, the happiest writer of his time,
Grew pale at hearing Reynolds was sublime;
That Rutland's Duchess wore a heavenly smile —
And I,' said he, 'neglected all the while!'

"A waspish tribe are these, on gilded wings,
Humming their lays, and brandishing their stings;
And thus they move their friends and foes among,
Prepared for soothing or satiric song.

"Hear me, my Boy; thou hast a virtuous mind—
But be thy virtues of the sober kind;
Be not a Quixote, ever up in arms
To give the guilty and the great alarms:
If never heeded, thy attack is vain;
And if they heed thee, they'll attack again;
Then too in striking at that heedless rate,
Thou in an instant may'st decide thy fate.

"Leave admonition—let the vicar give
Rules how the nobles of his flock should live;
Nor take that simple fancy to thy brain,
That thou canst cure the wicked and the vain.

"Our Pope, they say, once entertain'd the whim,
Who fear'd not God should be afraid of him;
But grant they fear'd him, was it further said,
That he reform'd the hearts he made afraid?
Did Chartres mend? Ward, Waters, and a score
Of flagrant felons, with his floggings sore?
Was Cibber silenced? No; with vigour blest,
And brazen front, half earnest, half in jest,
He dared the bard to battle, and was seen
In all his glory match'd with Pope and spleen;
Himself he stripp'd, the harder blow to hit,
Then boldly match'd his ribaldry with wit;
The poet's conquest truth and time proclaim,
But yet the battle hurt his peace and fame.

"Strive not too much for favour; seem at ease,
And rather pleased thyself, than bent to please:
Upon thy lord with decent care attend,
But not too near; thou canst not be a friend;

And favourite be not, 't is a dangerous post—
Is gain'd by labour, and by fortune lost:
Talents like thine may make a man approved,
But other talents trusted and beloved.
Look round, my son, and thou wilt early see
The kind of man thou art not formed to be.

"The real favourites of the great are they
Who to their views and wants attention pay.
And pay it ever; who, with all their skill,
Dive to the heart, and learn the secret will;
If that be vicious, soon can they provide
The favourite ill, and o'er the soul preside;
For vice is weakness, and the artful know
Their power increases as the passions grow;
If indolent the pupil, hard their task;
Such minds will ever for amusement ask;
And great the labour! for a man to choose
Objects for one whom nothing can amuse;
For ere these objects can the soul delight,
They must to joy the soul herself excite;
Therefore it is, this patient, watchful kind,
With gentle friction stir the drowsy mind:
Fix'd on their end, with caution they proceed,
And sometimes give and sometimes take the lead;
Will now a hint convey, and then retire,
And let the spark awake the lingering fire;
Or seek new joys, and livelier pleasures bring,
To give the jaded sense a quick'ning spring.

"These arts, indeed, my son must not pursue;
Nor must he quarrel with the tribe that do:
It is not safe another's crimes to know,
Nor is it wise our proper worth to show.—
'My lord,' you say, 'engaged me for that worth;'—
True, and preserve it ready to come forth:
If question'd, fairly answer,—and that done,
Shrink back, be silent, and thy father's son;
For they who doubt thy talents, scorn thy boast,
But they who grant them will dislike thee most:
Observe the prudent; they in silence sit,
Display no learning, and affect no wit;
They hazard nothing, nothing they assume,
But know the useful art of *acting dumb*.
Yet to their eyes each varying look appears,
And every word finds entrance at their ears.

"Thou art Religion's advocate—take heed,
Hurt not the cause, thy pleasure 't is to plead;
With wine before thee, and with wits beside,
Do not in strength of reasoning powers confide;

What seems to thee convincing, certain, plain,
They will deny, and dare thee to maintain;
And thus will triumph o'er thy eager youth,
While thou wilt grieve for so disgracing truth.
" With pain I've seen, these wrangling wits among
Faith's weak defender's passionate and young;
Weak thou art not, yet not enough on guard,
Where wit and humour keep their watch and ward:
Men gay and noisy will o'erwhelm thy sense,
Then loudly laugh at truth's and thy expense;
While the kind ladies will do all they can
To check their mirth, and cry, '*The good young man!*
" Prudence, my Boy, forbids thee to commend
The cause or party of thy noble friend;
What are his praises worth, who must be known
To take a Patron's maxims for his own?
When ladies sing, or in thy presence play,
Do not, dear John, in rapture melt away;
'T is not thy part, there will be list'ners round,
To cry *Divine!* and dote upon the sound;
Remember, too, that though the poor have ears,
They take not in the music of the spheres;
They must not feel the warble and the thrill,
Or be dissolved in ecstasy at will;
Beside, 't is freedom in a youth like thee
To drop his awe, and deal in ecstasy!
" In silent ease, at least in silence, dine,
Nor one opinion start of food or wine:
Thou know'st that all the science thou canst boast,
Is of thy father's simple boil'd and roast,
Nor always these; he sometimes saved his cash,
By interlinear days of frugal hash:
Wine hadst thou seldom; wilt thou be so vain
As to decide on claret or champagne?
Dost thou from me derive this taste sublime,
Who order port the dozen at a time?
When (every glass held precious in our eyes)
We judged the value by the bottle's size:
Then never merit for thy praise assume,
Its worth well knows each servant in the room.
" Hard, Boy, thy task, to steer thy way among
That servile, supple, shrewd insidious throng;
Who look upon thee as of doubtful race,
An interloper, one who wants a place:
Freedom with these, let thy free soul condemn,
Nor with thy heart's concerns associate them.
" Of all be cautious—but be most afraid
Of the pale charms that grace My Lady's Maid;

Of those sweet dimples, of that fraudful eye,
The frequent glance design'd for thee to spy;
The soft bewitching look, the fond bewailing sigh:
Let others frown and envy; she the while
(Insidious syren!) will demurely smile;
And for her gentle purpose, every day
Inquire thy wants, and meet thee in thy way;
She has her blandishments, and, though so weak,
Her person pleases, and her actions speak:
At first her folly may her aim defeat;
But kindness shown, at length will kindness meet:
Have some offended? them will she disdain,
And, for thy sake, contempt and pity feign;
She hates the vulgar, she admires to look
On woods and groves, and dotes upon a book;
Let her once see thee on her features dwell,
And hear one sigh, then liberty farewell.

"But, John, remember we cannot maintain
A poor proud girl, extravagant and vain.

"Doubt much of friendship; shouldst thou find a friend
Pleased to advise thee, anxious to commend;
Should he the praises he has heard report,
And confidence (in thee confiding) court;
Much of neglected Patrons should he say,
And then exclaim—'How long must merit stay!'
Then show how high thy modest hopes may stretch,
And point to stations far beyond thy reach;—
Let such designer, by thy conduct see
(Civil and cool) he makes no dupe of thee:
And he will quit thee, as a man too wise
For him to ruin first, and then despise.

"Such are thy dangers:—yet, if thou canst steer
Past all the perils, all the quicksands clear,
Then may'st thou profit; but if storms prevail,
If foes beset thee, if thy spirits fail,—
No more of winds or waters be the sport,
But in thy father's mansion find a port."

Our poet read.—"It is in truth," said he,
"Correct in part, but what is *this* to me?
I love a foolish Abigail! in base
And sordid office! fear not such disgrace:
Am I so blind?' "Or thou wouldst surely see
That lady's fall, if she should stoop to thee!"
"The cases differ." "True! for what surprise
Could from thy marriage with the maid arise?
But through the island would the shame be spread,
Should the fair mistress deign with thee to wed."

John saw not this: and many a week had pass'd,
While the vain Beauty held her victim fast;
The Noble Friend still condescension show'd,
And, as before, with praises overflow'd;
But his grave Lady took a silent view
Of all that pass'd, and smiling, pitied too.
Cold grew the foggy morn, the day was brief,
Loose on the cherry hung the crimson leaf;
The dew dwelt ever on the herb; the woods
Roar'd with strong blasts, with mighty show'rs the floods:
All green was vanish'd, save of pine and yew,
That still displayed their melancholy hue;
Save the green holly with its berries red,
And the green moss that o'er the gravel spread.
To public views my Lord must soon attend;
And soon the Ladies—would they leave their friend?
The time was fix'd—approach'd—was near—was come;
The trying time that fill'd his soul with gloom:
Thoughtful our poet in the morning rose,
And cried, "One hour my fortune will disclose;
Terrific hour! from thee have I to date
Life's loftier views, or my degraded state;
For now to be what I have been before
Is so to fall, that I can rise no more."
The morning meal was past; and all around
The mansion rang with each discordant sound;
Haste was in every foot, and every look
The trav'ller's joy for London-journey spoke:
Not so our youth; whose feelings, at the noise
Of preparation, had no touch of joys:
He pensive stood, and saw each carriage drawn,
With lackies mounted, ready on the lawn:
The Ladies came; and John in terror threw
One painful glance, and then his eyes withdrew;
Not with such speed, but he in other eyes
With anguish read—"I pity but despise—
Unhappy boy! presumptous scribbler!—you,
To dream such dreams!—be sober, and adieu!"
Then came the Noble Friend—"And will my lord
Vouchsafe no comfort? drop no soothing word?
Yes, he must speak:" he speaks, "My good young friend
You know my views; upon my care depend;
My hearty thanks to your good father pay,
And be a student.—Harry, drive away."
Stillness reign'd all around! of late so full
The busy scene, deserted now and dull:
Stern is his nature who forbears to feel
Gloom o'er his spirits on such trials steal.

Most keenly felt our poet as he went
From room to room without a fix'd intent:
"And here," he thought, "I was caress'd; admired
Were here my songs; she smiled, and I aspired:
The change how grievous!" As he mused, a dame
Busy and peevish to her duties came;
Aside the tables and the chairs she drew,
And sang and mutter'd in the poet's view:—
"This was her fortune: here they leave the poor,
Enjoy themselves and think of us no more;
I had a promise—" here his pride and shame
Urged him to fly from this familiar dame;
He gave one farewell look, and by a coach
Reach'd his own mansion at the night's approach.

His Father met him with an anxious air,
Heard his sad tale, and check'd what seem'd despair:
Hope was in him corrected, but alive;
My lord would something for a friend contrive;
His word was pledged: our hero's feverish mind
Admitted this, and half his grief resign'd:
But, when three months had fled, and every day
Drew from the sickening hopes their strength away,
The youth became abstracted, pensive, dull,
He utter'd nothing, though his heart was full;
Teased by enquiring words and anxious looks,
And all forgetful of his Muse and books;
Awake he mourn'd, but in his sleep perceived
A lovely vision that his pain relieved:—
His soul transported, hail'd the happy seat,
Where once his pleasure was so pure and sweet;
Where joys departed came in blissful view,
Till reason waked, and not a joy he knew.

Questions now vexed his spirit, most from those
Who are call'd friends, because they are not foes:
"John!" they would say; he, starting, turn'd round;
"John!" there was something shocking in the sound;
Ill brook'd he then the pert familiar phrase,
The untaught freedom, and th' inquiring gaze;
Much was his temper touch'd, his spleen provoked,
When ask'd how ladies talk'd, or walk'd, or look'd?
"What said my Lord of Politics? how spent
He there his time? and was he glad he went?"

At length a letter came, both cool and brief,
But still it gave the burthen'd heart relief:
Though not inspired by lofty hopes, the youth
Placed much reliance on Lord Frederick's truth;
Summon'd to town, he thought the visit one
Where something fair and friendly would be done;

Although he judged not, as before his fall,
When all was love and promise at the Hall.
Arrived in town, he early sought to know
The fate such dubious friendship would bestow;
At a tall building trembling he appear'd,
And his low rap was indistinctly heard;
A well-known servant came—"Awhile," said he,
"Be pleased to wait; my Lord has company."
Alone our hero sate; the news in hand,
Which though he read, he could not understand:
Cold was the day; in days so cold as these
There needs a fire, where minds and bodies freeze;
The vast and echoing room, the polish'd grate,
The crimson chairs, the sideboard with its plate;
The splendid sofa, which, though made for rest,
He then had thought it freedom to have press'd;
The shining tables, curiously inlaid,
Were all in comfortless proud style display'd;
And to the troubled feelings terror gave,
That made the once-dear friend, the sick'ning slave.
"Was he forgotten?" Thrice upon his ear
Struck the loud clock, yet no relief was near:
Each rattling carriage, and each thundering stroke
On the loud door, the dream of fancy broke;
Oft as a servant chanced the way to come,
"Brings he a message?" no! he pass'd the room:
At length 'tis certain; "Sir, you will attend
"At twelve on Thursday!" Thus the day had end.
Vex'd by these tedious hours of needless pain,
John left the noble mansion with disdain;
For there was something in the still, cold place,
That seem'd to threaten and portend disgrace.
Punctual again the modest rap declared
The youth attended; then was all prepared:
For the same servant, by his lord's command,
A paper offer'd to his trembling hand:
"No more!" he cried: "disdains he to afford
One kind expression, one consoling word!"
With troubled spirit he began to read
That "In the Church my lord could not succeed;"
Who had "to peers of either kind applied,
And was with dignity and grace denied;
While his own livings were by men possess'd,
Not likely in their chancels yet to rest;
And therefore, all things weigh'd (as he, my lord,
Had done maturely, and he pledged his word),
Wisdom it seem'd for John to turn his view
To busier scenes, and bid the church adieu!"

Here grieved the youth: he felt his father's pride
Must with his own be shock'd and mortified;
But, when he found his future comforts placed
Where he, alas! conceived himself disgraced—
In some appointment on the London quays,
He bade farewell to honour and to ease;
His spirit fell, and, from that hour assured
How vain his dreams, he suffer'd and was cured.
Our Poet hurries on, with wish to fly,
From all mankind, to be conceal'd, and die,
Alas! what hopes, what high romantic views
Did that one visit to the soul infuse, [to lose!
Which, cherish'd with such love, 't was worse than death
Still he would strive, though painful was the strife,
To walk in this appointed road of life;
On these low duties duteous he would wait,
And patient bear the anguish of his fate.
Thanks to the Patron, but of coldest kind,
Express'd the sadness of the Poet's mind;
Whose heavy hours were pass'd with busy men,
In the dull practice of th' official pen;
Who to Superiors must in time impart
(The custom this) his progress in their art:
But, so had grief on his perception wrought,
That all unheeded were the duties taught;
No answers gave he when his trial came,
Silent he stood, but suffering without shame;
And they observed that words severe or kind
Made no impression on his wounded mind:
For all perceived from whence his failure rose,
Some grief whose cause he deign'd not to disclose.
A soul averse from scenes and works so new,
Fear ever shrinking from the vulgar crew;
Distaste for each mechanic law and rule,
Thoughts of past honour and a patron cool;
A grieving parent, and a feeling mind,
Timid and ardent, tender and refin'd:
These all with mighty force the youth assail'd,
Till his soul fainted, and his reason fail'd:
When this was known, and some debate arose,
How they who saw it should the fact disclose,
He found their purpose, and in terror fled
From unseen kindness, with mistaken dread.
Meantime the parent was distress'd to find
His son no longer for a priest design'd;
But still he gain'd some comfort by the news
Of John's promotion, though with humbler views:
For he conceived that in no distant time
The boy would learn to scramble and to climb;

He little thought his son, his hope and pride,
His favour'd boy, was now a home denied:
Yes! while the parent was intent to trace
How men in office climb from place to place,
By day, by night, o'er moor, and heath, and hill,
Roved the sad youth, with ever-changing will,
Of every aid bereft, exposed to every ill.
Thus as he sate, absorb'd in all the care,
And all the hope that anxious fathers share,
A friend abruptly to his presence brought,
With trembling hand, the subject of his thought;
Whom he had found afflicted and subdued
By hunger, sorrow, cold, and solitude.
Silent he enter'd the forgotten room,
As ghostly forms may be conceived to come;
With sorrow-shrunken face and hair upright,
He look'd dismay, neglect, despair, affright;
But, dead to comfort, and on misery thrown,
His parent's loss he felt not, nor his own.
The good man, struck with horror, cried aloud,
And drew around him an astonish'd crowd;
The sons and servants to the father ran,
To share the feelings of the griev'd old man.
"Our brother, speak!" they all exclaim'd; "explain
Thy grief, thy suffering:"—but they ask'd in vain:
The friend told all he knew; and all was known
Save the sad causes whence the ills had grown:
But, if obscure the cause, they all agreed
From rest and kindness must the cure proceed:
And he was cured; for quiet, love, and care,
Strove with the gloom, and broke on the despair:
Yet slow their progress, and, as vapours move
Dense and reluctant from the wintry grove;
All is confusion till the morning light
Gives the dim scene obscurely to the sight;
More and yet more defined the trunks appear,
Till the wild prospect stands distinct and clear;—
So the dark mind of our young poet grew
Clear and sedate; the dreadful mist withdrew;
And he resembled that bleak wintry scene,
Sad, though unclouded; dismal, though serene.
At times he utter'd, "What a dream was mine!
And what a prospect! glorious and divine!
Oh! in that room, and on that night to see
These looks, that sweetness beaming all on me:
That syren-flattery—and to send me then,
Hope-raised and soften'd, to those heartless men;
That dark-brow'd stern Director, pleased to show
Knowledge of subjects, I disdain'd to know;

Cold and controlling—but 'tis gone—'tis past;
I had my trial, and have peace at last."
Now grew the youth resigned: he bade adieu
To all that hope, to all that fancy drew;
His frame was languid, and the hectic heat
Flush'd on his pallid face, and countless beat
The quick'ning pulse, and faint the limbs that bore
The slender form that soon would breathe no more.
Then hope of holy kind the soul sustain'd,
And not a lingering thought of earth remain'd;
Now Heaven had all, and he could smile at Love,
And the wild sallies of his youth reprove;
Then could he dwell upon the tempting days,
The proud aspiring thought, the partial praise;
Victorious now his worldly views were closed,
And on the bed of death the youth reposed.
The father grieved—but as the poet's heart
Was all unfitted for his earthly part;
As, he conceived, some other haughty fair
Would, had he lived, have led him to despair,
As, with this fear, the silent grave shut out
All feverish hope, and all tormenting doubt;
While the strong faith the pious youth possess'd,
His hope enlivening, gave his sorrows rest;
Soothed by these thoughts, he felt a mournful joy
For his aspiring and devoted boy.
Meantime the news through various channels spread,
The youth, once favour'd with such praise, was dead:
"Emma," the Lady cried, "my words attend,
Your syren-smiles have kill'd your humble friend;
The hope you raised can now delude no more,
Nor charms, that once inspired, can now restore."
Faint was the flush of anger and of shame,
That o'er the cheek of conscious beauty came:
"You censure not," said she, "the sun's bright rays,
When fools imprudent dare the dangerous gaze;
And should a stripling look till he were blind,
You would not justly call the light unkind:
But is he dead? and am I to suppose
The power of poison in such looks as those?"
She spoke, and pointing to the mirror, cast
A pleased gay glance, and curtsied as she pass'd.
My Lord, to whom the Poet's fate was told
Was much affected, for a man so cold:
"Dead!" said his lordship, "run distracted, mad!
Upon my soul I'm sorry for the lad;
And now, no doubt, th' obliging world will say
That my harsh usage help'd him on his way:

What! I suppose, I should have nursed his muse,
And with champagne have brightened up his views;
Then had he made me famed my whole life long,
And stunn'd my ears with gratitude and song.
Still should the father hear that I regret
Our joint misfortune—Yes! I'll not forget."—
Thus they:—The father to his grave convey'd
The son he loved, and his last duties paid.
"There lies my Boy," he cried, "of care bereft,
And, Heav'n be praised, I've not a genius left:
No one among ye, sons! is doomed to live
On high-raised hopes of what the Great may give;
None, with exalted views and fortunes mean,
To die in anguish, or to live in spleen:
Your pious brother soon escaped the strife
Of such contention, but it cost his life;
You then, my sons, upon yourselves depend,
And in your own exertions find the friend."

TALE VI.

THE FRANK COURTSHIP.

Yes, faith, it is my cousin's duty to make a curtsy, and say "Father, as it please you;" but for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another curtsy, and say, "Father, as it pleases me."—*Much Ado about Nothing.*

He cannot flatter, he!
An honest mind and plain—he must speak truth.—*King Lear.*

GRAVE *Jonas Kindred*, Sybil Kindred's sire,
Was six feet high, and look'd six inches higher;
Erect, morose, determined, solemn, slow,
Who knew the man, would never cease to know
His faithful spouse when Jonas was not by,
Had a firm presence and a steady eye;
But with her husband dropp'd her look and tone,
And Jonas ruled unquestion'd and alone.

He read, and oft would quote the sacred words,
How pious husbands of their wives were lords;
Sarah called Abraham Lord! and who could be,
So Jonas thought, a greater man than he?
Himself he view'd with undisguised respect,
And never pardon'd freedom or neglect.

They had one daughter, and this favourite child
Had oft the father of his spleen beguiled,
Soothed by attention from her early years,
She gain'd all wishes by her smiles or tears:
But *Sybil* then was in that playful time,
When contradiction is not held a crime;
When parents yield their children idle praise
For faults corrected in their after days.

Peace in the sober house of Jonas dwelt,
Where each his duty and his station felt:
Yet not that peace some favour'd mortals find,
In equal views and harmony of mind:
Not the soft peace that blesses those who love,
Where all with one consent in union move:

But it was that which one superior will
Commands, by making all inferiors still;
Who bids all murmurs, all objections cease,
And with imperious voice announces—Peace!
They were, to wit, a remnant of that crew,
Who, as their foes maintain, their Sovereign slew;
An independent race, precise, correct,
Who ever married in the kindred sect:
No son or daughter of their order wed
A friend to England's king who lost his head;
Cromwell was still their Saint, and when they met,
They mourn'd that Saints were not our rulers yet.
Fix'd were their habits; they arose betimes,
Then pray'd their hour, and sang their party-rhymes;
Their meals were plenteous, regular and plain,
The trade of Jonas brought him constant gain;
Vender of hops and malt, of coals and corn—
And, like his father, he was merchant born:
Neat was their house; each table, chair, and stool,
Stood in its place, or moving moved by rule;
No lively print or picture graced the room;
A plain brown paper lent its decent gloom;
But here the eye, in glancing round, survey'd
A small recess that seem'd for china made;
Such pleasing pictures seem'd this pencill'd ware,
That few would search for nobler objects there—
Yet, turn'd by chosen friends, and there appear'd
His stern, strong features, whom they all revered;
For there in lofty air was seen to stand
The bold Protector of the conquer'd land;
Drawn in that look with which he wept and swore,
Turn'd out the members, and made fast the door,
Ridding the house of every knave and drone,
Forced, though it grieved his soul, to rule alone.
The stern still smile each friend approving gave,
Then turn'd the view, and all again were grave.
There stood a clock, though small the owner's need
For habit told when all things should proceed;
Few their amusements, but when friends appear'd,
They with the world's distress their spirits cheer'd;
The nation's guilt, that would not long endure
The reign of man so modest and so pure:
Their town was large and seldom pass'd a day
But some had fail'd, and others gone astray;
Clerks had absconded, wives eloped, girls flown
To Gretna-Green, or sons rebellious grown;
Quarrels and fires arose;—and it was plain
The times were bad; the Saints had ceased to reign!

A few yet lived, to languish and to mourn
For good old manners never to return.
  Jonas had sisters, and of these was one
Who lost a husband and an only son:
Twelve months her sables she in sorrow wore,
And mourn'd so long that she could mourn no more.
Distant from Jonas, and from all her race,
She now resided in a lively place;
There, by the sect unseen, at whist she play'd,
Nor was of churchmen or their church afraid
If much of this the graver brother heard,
He something censured, but he little fear'd;
He knew her rich and frugal; for the rest,
He felt no care, or, if he felt, suppress'd:
Nor for companion when she ask'd her Niece,
Had he suspicions that disturb'd his peace;
Frugal and rich, these virtues as a charm
Preserved the thoughtful man from all alarm;
An infant yet, she soon would home return,
Nor stay the manners of the world to learn;
Meantime his boys would all his care engross,
And be his comforts if he felt the loss.
  The sprightly *Sybil*, pleased and unconfined,
Felt the pure pleasure of the op'ning mind:
All here was gay and cheerful—all at home
Unvaried quiet and unruffled gloom:
There were no changes,—and amusements few;—
Here, all was varied, wonderful, and new;
There were plain meals, plain dresses, and grave looks—
Here, gay companions, and amusing books;
And the young Beauty soon began to taste
The light vocations of the scene she graced.
  A man of business feels it as a crime
On calls domestic to consume his time;
Yet this grave man had not so cold a heart,
But with his daughter he was grieved to part:
And he demanded that in every year
The Aunt and Niece should at his house appear.
  "Yes! we must go, my child, and by our dress
A grave conformity of mind express;
Must sing at meeting, and from cards refrain,
The more t' enjoy when we return again."
  Thus spake the Aunt, and the discerning child
Was pleased to learn how fathers are beguiled.
Her artful part the young dissembler took,
And from the matron caught th' approving look:
When thrice the friends had met, excuse was sent
For more delay, and Jonas was content;

Till a tall maiden by her sire was seen,
In all the bloom and beauty of sixteen;
He gazed admiring:—she, with visage prim,
Glanced an arch look of gravity on him;
For she was gay at heart, but wore disguise,
And stood a vestal in her father's eyes;
Pure, pensive, simple, sad; the damsel's heart,
When Jonas praised, reproved her for the part;
For Sybil, fond of pleasure, gay and light,
Had still a secret bias to the right;
Vain as she was—and flattery made her vain—
Her simulation gave her bosom pain.

Again return'd, the Matron and the Niece
Found the late quiet gave their joy increase;
The aunt infirm, no more her visits paid,
But still with her sojourn'd the favourite maid.
Letters were sent when franks could be procured
And when they could not, silence was endured;
All were in health, and if they older grew,
It seem'd a fact that none among them knew;
The aunt and niece still led a pleasant life,
And quiet days had Jonas and his wife.

Near him a Widow dwelt of worthy fame,
Like his her manners, and her creed the same,
The wealth her husband left, her care retain'd
For one tall Youth, and widow she remain'd;
His love respectful all her care repaid,
Her wishes watch'd, and her commands obey'd.

Sober he was, and grave from early youth,
Mindful of forms, but more intent on truth;
In a light drab he uniformly dress'd,
And look serene th' unruffled mind express'd;
A hat with ample verge his brows o'erspread,
And his brown locks curl'd graceful on his head;
Yet might observers in his speaking eye
Some observation, some acuteness spy;
The friendly thought it keen, the treacherous deem'd it sly
Yet not a crime could foe or friend detect,
His actions all were, like his speech, correct;
And they who jested on a mind so sound,
Upon his virtues must their laughter found;
Chaste, sober, solemn, and devout they named
Him who was thus, and not of *this* ashamed.

Such were the virtues Jonas found in one
In whom he warmly wish'd to find a son:
Three years had pass'd since he had Sybil seen;
But she was doubtless what she once had been,
Lovely and mild, obedient and discreet;
The pair must love whenever they should meet;

Then ere the widow or the son should choose
Some happier maid, he would explain his views;
Now she, like him, was politic and shrewd,
With strong desire of lawful gain embued;
To all he said, she bow'd with much respect,
Pleased to comply, yet seeming to reject;
Cool and yet eager, each admired the strength
Of the opponent, and agreed at length:
As a drawn battle shows to each a force,
Powerful as his, he honours it of course;
So in these neighbours, each the power discern'd,
And gave the praise that was to each return'd.

Jonas now ask'd his daughter—and the Aunt,
Though loth to lose her, was obliged to grant:—
But would not Sybil to the matron cling,
And fear to leave the shelter of her wing?
No! in the young there lives a love of change,
And to the easy, they prefer the strange!
Then, too, the joys she once pursued with zeal,
From whist and visits sprung, she ceased to feel:
When with the matrons Sybil first sat down,
To cut for partners and to stake her crown,
This to the youthful maid preferment seem'd,
Who thought what woman she was then esteem'd;
But in few years, when she perceived, indeed,
The real woman to the girl succeed,
No longer tricks and honours fill'd her mind,
But other feelings, not so well defined;
She then reluctant grew, and thought it hard,
To sit and ponder o'er an ugly card;
Rather the nut-tree shade the nymph preferr'd,
Pleased with the pensive gloom and evening bird
Thither, from company retired, she took
The silent walk, or read the fav'rite book.

The father's letter, sudden, short, and kind,
Awaked her wonder, and disturb'd her mind;
She found new dreams upon her fancy seize,
Wild roving thoughts and endless reveries:
The parting came:—and when the Aunt perceived
The tears of Sybil, and how much she grieved—
To love for her that tender grief she laid,
That various, soft, contending passions made.

When Sybil rested in her father's arms,
His pride exulted in a daughter's charms;
A maid accomplish'd he was pleased to find,
Nor seem'd the form more lovely than the mind:
But when the fit of pride and fondness fled,
He saw his judgment by his hopes misled;

High were the lady's spirits, far more free
Her mode of speaking than a maid's should be;
Too much, as Jonas thought, she seem'd to know,
And all her knowledge was disposed to show;
"Too gay her dress, like those who idly dote
On a young coxcomb, or a coxcomb's coat;
In foolish spirits when our friends appear.
And vainly grave when not a man is near."
Thus Jonas, adding to his sorrow blame,
And terms disdainful to a Sister's name:—
"The sinful wretch has by her arts defiled
The ductile spirit of my darling child."
"The maid is virtuous," said the dame—Quoth he,
'Let her give proof, by acting virtuously:
Is it in gaping when the Elders pray?
In reading nonsense half a summer's day?
In those mock forms that she delights to trace,
Or her loud laughs in Hezekiah's face?
She—O Susanna!—to the world belongs;
She loves the follies of its idle throngs,
And reads soft tales of love, and sings love's soft'ning songs
But, as our friend is yet delay'd in town,
We must prepare her till the Youth comes down:
You shall advise the maiden; I will threat;
Her fears and hopes may yield us comfort yet."
Now the grave father took the lass aside,
Demanding sternly, "Wilt thou be a bride?"
She answer'd, calling up an air sedate,
"I have not vow'd against the holy state."
"No folly, Sybil," said the parent; "know
What to their parents virtuous maidens owe;
A worthy, wealthy youth, whom I approve,
Must thou prepare to honour and to love.
Formal to thee his air and dress may seem,
But the good youth is worthy of esteem:
Shouldst thou with rudeness treat him; of disdain
Should he with justice or of slight complain,
Or of one taunting speech give certain proof,
Girl! I reject thee from my sober roof.'
"My aunt," said Sybil, "will with pride protect
One whom a father can for this reject;
Nor shall a formal, rigid, soul-less boy
My manners alter, or my views destroy!"
Jonas then lifted up his hands on high,
And, utt'ring something 'twixt a groan and sigh,
Left the determined maid, her doubtful mother by.
"Hear me," she said; "incline thy heart my child,
And fix thy fancy on a man so mild:

Thy father, Sybil, never could be moved
By one who loved him, or by one he loved;
Union like ours is but a bargain made
By slave and tyrant—he will be obey'd;
Then calls the quiet, comfort—but thy Youth
Is mild by nature, and as frank as truth."
"But will he love?" said Sybil; "I am told
That these mild creatures are by nature cold."
"Alas!" the matron answer'd, "much I dread
That dangerous love by which the young are led!
That love is earthy; you the creature prize,
And trust your feelings and believe your eyes:
Can eyes and feelings inward worth descry?
No! my fair daughter, on our choice rely!
Your love, like that display'd upon the stage,
Indulged is folly, and opposed is rage;—
More prudent love our sober couples show,
All that to mortal beings, mortals owe;
All flesh is grass—before you give a heart,
Remember Sybil, that in death you part;
And should your husband die before your love,
What needless anguish must a widow prove!
No! my fair child, let all such visions cease;
Yield but esteem, and only try for peace."
"I must be loved," said Sybil; "I must see
The man in terrors who aspires to me;
At my forbidding frown his heart must ache,
His tongue must falter, and his frame must shake.
And if I grant him at my feet to kneel,
What trembling, fearful pleasure must he feel
Nay, such the raptures that my smiles inspire,
That reason's self must for a time retire."
"Alas! for good *Josiah*," said the dame,
"These wicked thoughts would fill his soul with shame
He kneel and tremble at a thing of dust!
He cannot, child:"—the Child replied, "He must."
They ceased: the matron left her with a frown;
So Jonas met her when the Youth came down:
'Behold," said he, "Thy future spouse attends,
Receive him, daughter, as the best of friends;
Observe respect him—humble be each word,
That welcomes home thy husband and thy lord."
Forwarn'd thought Sybil, with a bitter smile,
I shall prepare my manner and my style.
Ere yet Josiah enter'd on his task,
The father met him—"Deign to wear a mask
A few dull days. Josiah,—but a few—
It is our duty and the sex's due;

I wore it one, and every grateful wife
Repays it with obedience through her life:
Have no regard to Sybil's dress, have none
To her pert language, to her flippant tone;
Henceforward thou shalt rule unquestion'd and alone;
And she thy pleasure in thy looks shall seek—
How she shall dress, and whether she may speak."
A sober smile return'd the Youth, and said,
"Can I cause fear, who am myself afraid?"
Sybil, meantime, sat thoughtful in her room,
And often wonder'd—"Will the creature come?
Nothing shall tempt, shall force me to bestow
My hand upon him,—yet I wish to know."
The door unclosed, and she beheld her sire
Lead in the youth, then hasten to retire;
"Daughter, my friend—my daughter, friend," he cried,
And gave a meaning look, and stepp'd aside:
That look contain'd a mingled threat and prayer,
"Do take him, child—offend him, if you dare."
The couple gazed—were silent, and the maid
Look'd in his face, to make the man afraid;
The man, unmoved, upon the maiden cast
A steady view—so salutation pass'd:
But in this instant Sybil's eye had seen
The tall fair person, and the still staid mein;
The glow that temp'rance o'er the cheek had spread,
Where the soft down half veil'd the purest red;
And the serene deportment that proclaim'd
A heart unspotted, and a life unblamed:
But then with these she saw attire too plain,
The pale brown coat, though worn without a stain.
The formal air, and something of the pride
That indicates the wealth it seems to hide;
And looks that were not, she conceived, exempt
From a proud pity, or a sly contempt.
Josiah's eyes had their employment too,
Engaged and soften'd by so bright a view;
A fair and meaning face, an eye of fire,
That check'd the bold, and made the free retire:
But then with these he mark'd the studied dress
And lofty air, that scorn or pride express;
With that insidious look, that seemed to hide
In an affected smile the scorn and pride;
And if his mind the virgin's meaning caught,
He saw a foe with treacherous purpose fraught—
Captive the heart to take, and reject it, caught.
Silent they sate—thought Sybil, that he seeks
Something, no doubt; I wonder if he speaks:

Scarcely she wonder'd, when these accents fell
Slow in her ear—"Fair maiden, art thou well?"
"Art thou physician?" she replied; "my hand,
My pulse, at least shall be at thy command."
She said—and saw, surprised, Josiah kneel,
And gave his lips the offer'd pulse to feel;
The rosy colour rising in her cheek,
Seem'd that surprise unmix'd with wrath to speak;
Then sternness she assumed, and—"Doctor, tell—
Thy words cannot alarm me—am I well?"
"Thou art," said he; "and yet thy dress so light,
I do conceive, some danger must excite:"
"In whom?" said Sybil, with a look demure:
"In more," said he, "than I expect to cure;—
I, in thy light luxuriant robe, behold
Want and excess, abounding and yet cold;
Here needed, there display'd, in many a wanton fold.
Both health and beauty, learned authors show,
From a just medium in our clothing flow."
"Proceed, good doctor; if so great my need,
What is thy fee? Good doctor! pray proceed."
"Large is my fee, fair lady, but I take
None till some progress in my cure I make:
Thou hast disease, fair maiden; thou art vain;
Within that face sit insult and disdain;
Thou art enamour'd of thyself; my art
Can see the naughty malice of thy heart:
With a strong pleasure would thy bosom move,
Were I to own thy power and ask thy love;
And such thy beauty, damsel, that I might,
But for thy pride, feel danger in thy sight,
And loose my present peace in dreams of vain delight."
"And can thy patients," said the nymph, "endure
Physic like this? and will it work a cure?"
"Such is my hope, fair damsel; thou, I find,
Hast the true tokens of a noble mind;
But the world wins thee, Sybil, and thy joys
Are placed in trifles, fashions, follies, toys;
Thou hast sought pleasure in the world around,
That in thine own pure bosom should be found:
Did all that world admire thee, praise and love,
Could it the least of nature's pains remove?
Could it for errors, follies, sins atone,
Or give thee comfort, thoughtful and alone?
It has, believe me, maid, no power to charm
Thy soul from sorrow, or thy flesh from harm:
Turn then, fair creature, from a world of sin,
And seek the jewel happiness within."

"Speak'st thou at meeting?" said the nymph, "thy speech
Is that of mortal very prone to teach; [speech
But wouldst thou, doctor, from the patient learn
Thine own disease?—The cure is thy concern."
"Yea, with good will."—"Then know 'tis thy complaint
That, for a sinner, thou'rt too much a saint;
Hast too much show of the sedate and pure,
And without cause art formal and demure:
This makes a man unsocial, unpolite;
Odious when wrong, and insolent if right.
Thou may'st be good, but why should goodness be
Wrapt in a garb of such formality?
Thy person well might please a damsel's eye,
In decent habit with a scarlet dye;
But, jest apart—what virtue canst thou trace
In that broad brim that hides thy sober face?
Does that long-skirted drab, that over-nice
And formal clothing, prove a scorn of vice?
Then for thine accent—what in sound can be
So void of grace as dull monotony?
Love has a thousand varied notes to move
The human heart: thou may'st not speak of love,
Till thou hast cast thy formal ways aside,
And those becoming youth and nature tried:
Not till exterior freedom, spirit, ease,
Prove it thy study and delight to please;
Not till these follies meet thy just disdain,
While yet thy virtues and thy worth remain."
"This is severe!—Oh! maiden, wilt not thou
Something for habits, manners, modes, allow?"—
"Yes! but allowing much, I much require,
In my behalf, for manners, modes, attire!"
"True, lovely Sybil; and, this point agreed,
Let me to those of greater weight proceed:
Thy father!"—"Nay," she quickly interposed,
"Good doctor, here our conference is closed!"
Then left the Youth, who, lost in his retreat,
Passed the good matron on her garden-seat;
His looks were troubled, and his air, once mild
And calm, was hurried:—"My audacious child!"
Exclaimed the dame, "I read what she has done
In thy displeasure—Ah! the thoughtless one:
But yet, Josiah, to my stern good man
Speak of the maid as mildly as you can:
Can you not seem to woo a little while
The daughter's will, the father to beguile?
So that his wrath in time may wear away;
Will you preserve our peace, Josiah? say."

"Yes! my good neighbour," said the gentle youth.
"Rely securely on my care and truth;
And should thy comfort with my efforts cease;
And only then,—perpetual is thy peace."
The dame had doubts: she well his virtues knew,
His deeds were friendly, and his words were true;
"But to address this vixen is a task
He is ashamed to take, and I to ask."
Soon as the father from Josiah learn'd
What pass'd with Sybil, he the truth discern'd.
"He loves," the man exclaimed, "he loves, 'tis plain,
The thoughtless girl, and shall he love in vain?
She may be stubborn, but she shall be tried,
Born as she is of wilfulness and pride."
With anger fraught, but willing to persuade,
The wrathful father met the smiling maid.
"Sybil," said he, "I long, and yet I dread
To know thy conduct—hath Josiah fled?
And grieved and fretted by the scornful air,
For his lost peace, betaken him to prayer?
Couldst thou his pure and modest mind distress,
By vile remarks upon his speech, address,
Attire, and voice?"—"All this I must confess."—
"Unhappy child! what labour will it cost
To win him back!"—"I do not think him lost."—
"Courts he then, (trifler!) insult and disdain?"—
"No: but from these he courts me to refrain."—
"Then hear me, Sybil—should Josiah leave
Thy father's house?"—"My father's child would grieve:"
"That is of grace, and if he come again
To speak of love?"—"I might from grief refrain."—
"Then wilt thou, daughter, our design embrace?"—
"Can I resist it, if it be of grace?"—
"Dear child! in three plain words thy mind express—
Wilt thou have this good youth?"—"Dear father! yes."

TALE VII.

THE WIDOW'S TALE.

Ah me! for aught that I could ever read,
Or ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth;
But either it was different in blood,
Or else misgrafted in respect of years,
Or else it stood upon the choice of friends;
Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it.
Midsummer Night's Dream.

Cry the man mercy; love him, take his offer.—*As You Like It.*

To Farmer *Moss*, in Langar Vale, came down,
His only Daughter, from her school in town;
A tender, timid maid! who knew not how
To pass a pig-sty, or to face a cow:
Smiling she came, with petty talents graced,
A fair complexion, and a slender waist.
Used to spare meals, disposed in manner pure,
Her father's kitchen she could ill endure:
Where by the steaming beef he hungry sat,
And laid at once a pound upon his plate;
Hot from the field her eager brother seized
An equal part, and hunger's rage appeased;
The air surcharged with moisture, flagged around,
And the offended damsel sighed and frowned;
The swelling fat in lumps conglomerate laid,
And fancy's sickness seized the loathing maid;
But when the men beside their station took,
The maidens with them, and with these the cook:
When one huge wooden bowl before them stood,
Fill'd with huge balls of farinaceous food;
With bacon, mass saline, where never lean
Beneath the brown and bristly rind was seen;
When from a single horn the party drew
Their copious draughts of heavy ale and new;
When the coarse cloth she saw, with many a stain
Soil'd by rude hinds who cut and came again—

She could not breathe; but with a heavy sigh,
Rein'd the fair neck, and shut th' offended eye;
She minced the sanguine flesh in frustums fine,
And wondered much to see the creatures dine:
When she resolved her father's heart to move,
If hearts of farmers were alive to love.
She now entreated by herself to sit
In the small parlour, if papa thought fit,
And there to dine, to read, to work alone:
"No!" said the Farmer, in an angry tone,
"These are your school-taught airs; your mother's pride
Would send you there; but I am now your guide.—
Arise betimes, our early meal prepare,
And, this dispatch'd, let business be your care;
Look to the lasses, let there not be one
Who lacks attention, till her tasks be done;
In every household work your portion take,
And what you make not see that others make:
At leisure times attend the wheel, and see
The wit'ning webb be sprinkled on the lea;
When thus employed should our young neighbour view,
A useful lass,—you may have more to do."
Dreadful were these commands; but worst than these
The parting hint—a Farmer could not please:
'Tis true she had without abhorrence seen
Young *Harry Carr*, when he was smart and clean;
But, to be married, to be a farmer's wife—
A slave! a drudge!—she could not for her life.
With swimming eyes the fretful nymph withdrew,
And, deeply sighing, to her chamber flew;
There on her knees, to Heaven she grieving pray'd
For change of prospect to a tortured maid.
Harry, a youth whose late-departed sire
Had left him all industrious men require,
Saw the pale Beauty,—and her shape and air
Engaged him much, and yet he must forbear:
"For my small farm, what can the damsel do?"
He said,—then stopp'd to take another view:
"Pity so sweet a lass will nothing learn
Of household cares,—for what can beauty earn
By those small arts which they at school attain,
That keep them useless, and yet make them vain?"
This luckless damsel look'd the village round,
To find a friend, and one was quickly found:
A pensive Widow,—whose mild air and dress
Pleased the sad nymph, who wish'd her soul's distress
To one so seeming kind, confiding, to confess.
"What lady that?" the anxious lass inquired,
Who then beheld the one she most admired:

"Here," said the Brother, are no ladies seen—
That is a widow dwelling on the green;
A dainty dame, who can but barely live
On her poor pittance, yet contrives to give;
She happier days has known, but seems at ease,
And you may call her lady, if you please:
But if you wish, good sister, to improve,
You shall see twenty better worth your love."

These *Nancy* met; but spite of all they taught,
This useless Widow was the one she sought:
The father growl'd; but said he knew no harm
In such connexion that could give alarm;
"And if we thwart the trifler in her course,
'Tis odds against us she will take a worse."

Then met the friends; the Widow heard the sigh
That ask'd at once compassion and reply.—
"Would you, my child, converse with one so poor
Yours were the kindness—yonder is my door:
And, save the time that we in public pray,
From that poor cottage I but rarely stray."

There went the nymph, and made her strong complaints,
Painting her woe as injured feelings paints.

"Oh, dearest friend! do think how one must feel
Shock'd all day long, and sickened every meal;
Could you behold our kitchen (and to you
A scene so shocking must indeed be new),
A mind like yours, with true refinement graced,
Would let no vulgar scenes pollute your taste;
And yet, in truth, from such a polish'd mind
All base ideas must resistance find,
And sordid pictures from the fancy pass,
As the breath startles from the polish'd glass.

Here you enjoy a sweet romantic scene,
Without so pleasant, and within so clean;
These twining jessamines, what delicious gloom
And soothing fragrance yield they to the room!
What lovely garden! there you oft retire,
And tales of woe and tenderness admire:
In that neat case your books in order placed,
Soothe the full soul, and charm the cultured taste;
And thus, while all about you wears a charm,
How must you scorn the Farmer and the Farm?"

The Widow smiled, and "Know you not," said she,
"How much these farmers scorn or pity me;
Who see what you admire, and laugh at all they see?
True, their opinion alters not my fate,
By falsely judging of an humble state:
This garden you with such delight behold,
Tempts not a feeble dame who dreads the cold·

These plants, which please so well your livelier sense,
To mine but little of their sweets dispense:
Books soon are painful to my failing sight,
And oftener read from duty than delight;
(Yet let me own, that I can sometimes find
Both joy and duty in the act combined,)
But view me rightly, you will see no more
Than a poor female, willing to be poor;
Happy indeed, but not in books nor flowers,
Not in fair dreams, indulged in earlier hours,
Of never-tasted joys;—such visions shun,
My youthful friend, nor scorn the Farmer's Son."
"Nay," said the Damsel, nothing pleased to see
A Friend's advice could like a Father's be,
"Bless'd in your cottage, you must surely smile
At those who live in our detested style:
To my Lucinda's sympathising heart
Could I my prospects and my griefs impart,
She would console me; but I dare not show
Ills that would wound her tender soul to know:
And I confess it shocks my pride to tell
The secrets of the prison where I dwell;
For that dear maiden would be shock'd to feel
The secrets I should shudder to reveal:
When told her friend was by a parent ask'd,
Fed you the swine?'—Good heaven! how I am task'd!—
What! can you smile? Ah! smile not at the grief
That woos your pity and demands relief."
"Trifles, my love you take a false alarm;
Think, I beseech you, better of the Farm:
Duties in every state demand your care,
And light are those that will require it there.
Fix on the Youth a favouring eye, and these,
To him pertaining, or as his, will please."
"What words," the Lass replied, "offend by ear!
Try you my patience? Can you be sincere?
And am I told a willing hand to give
To a rude farmer, and with rustics live?
Far other fate was yours;—some gentle youth
Admired your beauty, and avow'd his truth;
The power of love prevail'd, and freely both
Gave the fond heart, and pledged the binding oath;
And then the rival's plot, the parent's power,
And jealous fears drew on the happy hour:
Ah! let not memory lose the blissful view,
But fairly show what love has done for you."
'Agreed, my daughter; what my heart has known
Of Love's strange power, shall be with frankness shown

But let me warn you, that experience finds
Few of the scenes that lively hope designs."—
"Mysterious all," said Nancy, "you, I know,
Have suffer'd much; now deign the grief to show —
I am your friend, and so prepare my heart
In all your sorrows to receive a part.
The widow answer'd: "I had once, like you,
Such thoughts of love; no dream is more untrue;
You judge it fated and decreed to dwell
In youthful hearts, which nothing can expel,
A passion doom'd to reign, and irresistible.
The struggling mind, when once subdued, in vain
Rejects the fury or defies the pain;
The strongest reason fails the flame to allay,
And resolution droops and faints away:
Hence, when the destined lovers meet, they prove
At once the force of this all-powerful love;
Each from that period feels the mutual smart,
Nor seeks to cure it—heart is changed for heart;
Nor is there peace till they delighted stand,
And at the altar—hand is join'd to hand.
"Alas! my child, there are who, dreaming so,
Waste their fresh youth, and waking feel the woe;
There is no spirit sent the heart to move
With such prevailing and alarming love;
Passion to reason will submit—or why
Should wealthy maids the poorest swains deny?
Or how could classes and degrees create
The slightest bar to such resistless fate?
Yet high and low, you see, forbear to mix;
No beggars' eyes the heart of kings transfix:
And who but am'rous peers or nobles sigh,
When titled beauties pass triumphant by?
For reason wakes, proud wishes to reprove:
You cannot hope, and therefore dare not love:
All would be safe, did we at first enquire—
'Does reason sanction what our hearts desire?'
But quitting precept, let example show
What joys from Love uncheck'd by prudence flow.
"A Youth, my father in his office placed,
Of humble fortune, but with sense and taste;
But he was thin and pale, had downcast looks;
He studied much, and pored upon his books:
Confused he was when seen, and, when he saw
Me or my sisters, would in haste withdraw;
And had this youth departed with the year,
His loss had cost us neither sigh nor tear.
"But with my father still the youth remain'd,
And more reward and kinder notice gain'd:

He often, reading, to the garden stray'd,
Where I by books or musing was delay'd;
This to discourse in summer evenings led,
Of these same evenings, or of what we read:
On such occasions we were much alone;
But, save the look, the manner, and the tone,
(These might have meaning,) all that we discuss'd
We could with pleasure to a parent trust.

"At length 't was friendship—and my Friend and I
Said we were happy and began to sigh:
My sisters first, and then my father found
That we were wandering o'er enchanting ground;
But he had troubles in his own affairs,
And would not bear addition to his cares:
With pity moved, yet angry, 'Child,' said he,
'Will you embrace contempt and beggary?
Can you endure to see each other cursed
By want, of every human woe the worst?
Warring for ever with distress, in dread
Either of begging or of wanting bread;
While poverty, with unrelenting force,
Will your own offspring from your love divorce,
They, through your folly, must be doom'd to pine,
And you deplore your passion, or resign;
For if it die, what good will then remain?
And if it live, it doubles every pain.'"

"But you were true," exclaim'd the Lass, "and fled
The tyrant's power who fill'd your soul with dread;"
"But," said the smiling Friend, "he fill'd my mouth with bread:
And in what other place that bread to gain
We long consider'd, and we sought in vain:
This was my twentieth year,—at thirty-five
Our hope was fainter, yet our love alive;
So many years in anxious doubt had pass'd."
"Then," said the Damsel, "you were bless'd at last."
A smile again adorn'd the Widow's face,
But soon a starting tear usurp'd its place.

"Slow pass'd the heavy years, and each had more
Pains and vexations than the years before.
My father fail'd; his family was rent,
And to new states his grieving daughters sent;
Each to more thriving kindred found a way,
Guests without welcome—servants without pay.
Our parting hour was grievous; still I feel
The sad, sweet converse at our final meal;
Our father then reveal'd his former fears,
Cause of his sternness, and then join'd our tears;

Kindly he strove our feelings to repress,
But died, and left us heirs to his distress.
The rich, as humble friends, my sisters chose;
I with a wealthy widow sought repose;
Who with a chilling frown her friend received,
Bade me rejoice, and wonder'd that I grieved:
In vain my anxious lover tried his skill
To rise in life, he was dependant still;
We met in grief, nor can I paint the fears
Of these unhappy, troubled, trying years:
Our dying hopes and stronger fears between,
We felt no season peaceful or serene;
Our fleeting joys, like meteors in the night,
Shone on our gloom with inauspicious light;
And then domestic sorrows, till the mind,
Worn with distresses, to despair inclined;
Add too the ill that from the passion flows,
When its contemptuous frown the world bestows,
The peevish spirit caused by long delay,
When, being gloomy, we contemn the gay,
When, being wretched, we incline to hate
And censure others in a happier state:
Yet loving still, and still compell'd to move
In the sad labyrinth of lingering love:
While you, exempt from want, despair, alarm,
May wed—oh! take the Farmer and the Farm."

"Nay," said the Nymph, "joy smiled on you at last?
"Smiled for a moment," she replied, "and pass'd:
My lover still the same dull means pursued,
Assistant call'd, but kept in servitude;
His spirits wearied in the prime of life,
By fears and wishes in eternal strife;
At length he urged impatient—'Now consent;
With thee united, Fortune may relent.'
I paused, consenting; but a Friend arose,
Pleased a fair view, though distant to disclose;
From the rough ocean we beheld a gleam
Of joy, as transient as the joys we dream;
By lying hopes deceived, my friend retired,
And sail'd—was wounded—reach'd us—and expired
You shall behold his grave; and when I die,
There—but 't is folly—I request to lie."

"Thus," said the Lass, "to joy you bade adieu!
But how a widow?—that cannot be true:
Or was it force in some unhappy hour,
That placed you, grieving, in a tyrant's power?"

"Force, my young friend, when forty years are fled
Is what a woman seldom has to dread;

She needs no brazen locks nor guarding walls,
And seldom comes a lover though she calls:
Yet, moved by fancy, one approved my face,
Though time and tears had wrought it much disgrace
"The man I married was sedate and meek,
And spoke of love as men in earnest speak;
Poor as I was, he ceaseless sought, for years,
A heart in sorrow and a face in tears:
That heart I gave not; and 'twas long before
I gave attention, and then nothing more;
But in my breast some grateful feeling rose,
For one whose love so sad a subject chose;
Till long delaying, fearing to repent,
But grateful still, I gave a cold assent.
"Thus we were wed; no fault had I to find,
And he but one; my heart could not be kind:
Alas! of every early hope bereft,
There was no fondness in my bosom left:
So had I told him, but had told in vain,
He lived but to indulge me and complain:
His was this cottage; he inclosed this ground,
And planted all these blooming shrubs around;
He to my room these curious trifles brought,
And with assiduous love my pleasure sought;
He lived to please me, and I ofttimes strove,
Smiling, to thank his unrequited love:
'Teach me,' he cried, 'that pensive mind to ease,
For all my pleasure is the hope to please.'
"Serene, though heavy, were the days we spent,
Yet kind each word, and generous each intent;
But his dejection lessen'd every day,
And to a placid kindness died away:
In tranquil ease we pass'd our latter years,
By griefs untroubled, unassail'd by fears,
"Let not romantic views your bosom sway,
Yield to your duties, and their call obey:
Fly not a Youth, frank, honest, and sincere;
Observe his merits, and his passion hear!
'Tis true, no hero, but a farmer sues—
Slow in his speech, but worthy in his views;
With him you cannot that affliction prove
That rends the bosom of the poor, in love:
Health, comfort, competence, and cheerful days,
Your friends' approval, and your father's praise,
Will crown the deed, and you escape *their* fate,
Who plan so wildly, and are wise too late."
The Damsel heard; at first th' advice was strange,
Yet wrought a happy, nay, a speedy change:

"I have no care," she said, when next they met,
"But one may wonder, he is silent yet:
He looks around him with his usual stare,
And utters nothing—not that I shall care."
This pettish humour pleased th' experienced Friend —
None need despair, whose silence can offend;
"Should I," resumed the thoughtful Lass, "consent
To hear the man, the man may now repent:
Think you my sighs shall call him from the plough,
Or give one hint, that 'You may woo me now?'"
"Persist, my love," replied the Friend, "and gain
A parent's praise *that* cannot be in vain."
The father saw the change, but not the cause,
And gave the altered maid his fond applause:
The coarser manners she in part removed,
In part endured, improving and improved;
She spoke of household works, she rose betimes,
And said neglect and indolence were crimes;
The various duties of their life she weigh'd,
And strict attention to her dairy paid;
The names of servants now familiar grew,
And fair Lucinda's from her mind withdrew;
As prudent travellers for their ease assume
Their modes and language to whose lands they come.
So to the Farmer this fair Lass inclined,
Gave to the business of the Farm her mind;
To useful arts she turn'd her hand and eye;
And by her manners told him—"You may try."
Th' observing Lover more attention paid,
With growing pleasure, to the alter'd maid;
He fear'd to lose her, and began to see
That a slim beauty might a helpmate be:
'Twixt hope and fear he now the lass address'd,
And in his Sunday robe his love express'd:
She felt no chilling dread, no thrilling joy,
Nor was too quickly kind, too slowly coy;
But still she lent an unreluctant ear
To all the rural business of the year:
Till love's strong hopes endured no more delay,
And Harry ask'd, and Nancy named the day.
"A happy change! my Boy," the father cried:
"How lost your sister all her school-day pride?"
The Youth replied, "It is the Widow's deed;
The cure is perfect, and was wrought with speed."
And comes there, Boy, this benefit of books,
Of that smart dress, and of those dainty looks?
We must be kind—some offerings from the Farm
To the White Cot will speak our feelings warm:

Will show that people, when they know the fact,
Where they have judged severely, can retract.
Oft have I smiled, when I beheld her pass
With cautious step, as if she hurt the grass;
Where, if a snail's retreat she chanced to storm,
She look'd as begging pardon of the worm;
And what, said I, still laughing at the view,
Have these weak creatures in the world to do?
But some are made for action, some to speak;
And, while she looks so pitiful and meek,
Her words are weighty, though her nerves are weak.

Soon told the village-bells the rite was done,
That join'd the school-bred Miss and Farmer's Son;
Her former habits some slight scandal raised,
But real worth was soon perceived and praised;
She, her neat taste imparted to the Farm,
And he, th' improving skill and vigorous arm.

TALE VIII.

THE MOTHER.

Wilt thou love such a woman? What! to make thee an instrument, and play false strains upon thee!—Not to be endured.— *As you Like It.*

Be this sweet Helen's knell;
He left a wife whose words all ears took captive,
Whose dear perfections hearts that scorn'd to serve
Humbly call'd Mistress. *All's Well that Ends Well.*

THERE was a worthy, but a simple pair,
Who nursed a Daughter fairest of the fair;
Sons they had lost, and she alone remain'd,
Heir to the kindness they had all obtain'd;
Heir to the fortune they designed for all,
Nor had th' allotted portion then been small;
But now, by fate enrich'd with beauty rare,
They watch'd their treasure with peculiar care:
The fairest features they could early trace,
And, blind with love, saw merit in her face—
Saw virtue, wisdom, dignity, and grace;
And *Dorothea*, from her infant years,
Gain'd all her wishes from their pride or fears:
She wrote a billet, and a novel read,
And with her fame her vanity was fed:
Each word, each look, each action was a cause
For flattering wonder and for fond applause;
She rode or danced, and ever glanced around,
Seeking for praise, and smiling when she found.
The yielding pair to her petitions gave
An humble friend to be a civil slave;
Who for a poor support herself resign'd
To the base toil of a dependent mind:
By nature cold, our Heiress stoop'd to art,
To gain the credit of a tender heart.
Hence at her door must suppliant paupers stand,
To bless the bounty of her beauteous hand:

And now, her education all complete,
She talk'd of virtuous love and union sweet;
She was indeed by no soft passion moved,
But wish'd, with all her soul, to be beloved.
Here, on the favour'd beauty Fortune smiled;
Her chosen Husband was a man so mild,
So humbly temper'd, so intent to please,
It quite distress'd her to remain at ease,
Without a cause to sigh, without pretence to tease:
She tried his patience in a thousand modes,
And tired it not upon the roughest roads.
Pleasure she sought, and disappointed, sigh'd
For joy, she said, "to her alone denied;"
And she was "sure her parents, if alive,
Would many comforts for their child contrive:"
The gentle Husband bade her name him one;
"No—that," she answer'd "should for her be done;
How could she say what pleasures were around?
But she was certain many might be found." [grace?
"Would she some sea-port, Weymouth, Scarborough
"He knew she hated every watering-place;"—
"The town?"—"What! now 't was empty, joyless, dull?"
—"In winter?"—"No; she liked it worse when full."
She talk'd of building—"Would she plan a room?"—
"No! she could live, as he desired in gloom:"
"Call then our friends and neighbours;"—"He might call
And they might come and fill his ugly hall;
A noisy vulgar set, he knew she scorn'd them all:"—
Then might their two dear girls the time employ,
And their improvement yield a solid joy;"
Solid indeed! and heavy—oh! the bliss
Of teaching letters to a lisping miss!"—
"My dear, my gentle Dorothea, say,
Can I oblige you?"—"You may go away."
Twelve heavy years this patient soul sustain'd
This wasp's attacks, and then her praise obtain'd,
Graved on a marble tomb, where he at peace remain'd.
Two daughters wept their loss: the one a child
With a plain face, strong sense, and temper mild,
Who keenly felt the Mother's angry taunt,
"Thou art the image of thy pious Aunt:"
Long time had *Lucy* wept her slighted face,
And then began to smile at her disgrace.
Her father's sister, who the world had seen
Near sixty years when Lucy saw sixteen,
Begg'd the plain girl: the gracious Mother smiled,
And freely gave her grieved but passive child;
And I with her elder-born, the beauty blest,
This parent rested, if such minds can rest:

No miss her waxen babe could so admire,
Nurse with such care, or with such pride attire;
They were companions meet, with equal mind,
Bless'd with one love, and to one point inclined;
Beauty to keep, adorn, increase, and guard,
Was their sole care, and had its full reward:
In rising splendor with the one it reign'd,
And in the other was by care sustain'd,
The daughter's charms increased, the parent's yet remain'd
Leave we these ladies to their daily care,
To see how meekness and discretion fare:—
A village maid, unvex'd by want or love,
Could not with more delight than Lucy move;
The village-lark, high mounted in the spring,
Could not with purer joy than Lucy sing;
Her cares all light, her pleasures all sincere,
Her duty joy, and her companion dear;
In tender friendship and in true respect
Lived Aunt and Niece, no flattery, no neglect—
They read, walk'd, visited—together pray'd,
Together slept the matron and the maid:
There was such goodness, such pure nature seen
In Lucy's looks, a manner so serene;
Such harmony in motion, speech, and air,
That without fairness she was more than fair,
Had more than beauty in each speaking grace,
That lent their cloudless glory to the face;
Where mild good sense in placid looks were shown,
And felt in every bosom but her own.
The one presiding feature in her mind,
Was the pure meekness of a will resign'd;
A tender spirit, freed from all pretence
Of wit, and pleased in mild benevolence;
Blest in protecting fondness she reposed,
With every wish indulged though undisclosed;
But Love, like zephyr on the limpid lake,
Was now the bosom of the maid to shake,
And in that gentle mind a gentle strife to make.
Among their chosen friends, a favour'd few,
The aunt and niece a youthful Rector knew;
Who though a younger brother, might address
A younger sister, fearless of success:
His friends, a lofty race, their native pride
At first display'd, and their assent denied;
But, pleased such virtues and such love to trace,
They own'd she would adorn the loftiest race.
The Aunt, a mother's caution to supply,
Had watch'd the youthful priest with jealous eye

And anxious for her charge, had view'd unseen
The cautious life that keeps the conscience clean:
In all she found him all she wish'd to find,
With slight exception of a lofty mind:
A certain manner that express'd desire,
To be received as brother to the Squire.
Lucy's meek eye had beam'd with many a tear,
Lucy's soft heart had beat with many a fear,
Before he told (although his looks, she thought,
Had oft confess'd) that he her favour sought;
But when he kneel'd, (she wish'd him not to kneel,)
And spoke the fears and hopes that lovers feel;
When too the prudent aunt herself confess'd,
Her wishes on the gentle youth would rest;
The maiden's eye with tender passion beam'd,
She dwelt with fondness on the life she schemed,
The household cares, the soft and lasting ties
Of love, with all his binding charities:
Their village taught, consoled, assisted, fed,
Till the young zealot tears of pleasure shed.

But would her Mother? Ah! she fear'd it wrong
To have indulged these forward hopes so long;
Her mother lov'd, but was not used to grant
Favours so freely as her gentle aunt.—
Her gentle aunt, with smiles that angels wear,
Dispell'd her Lucy's apprehensive tear:
Her prudent foresight the request had made
To one whom none could govern, few persuade;
She doubted much if one in earnest woo'd
A girl with not a single charm endued:
The Sister's nobler views she then declared,
And what small sum for Lucy could be spared;
"If more than this the foolish priest requires,
Tell him," she wrote, "to check his vain desires."
At length, with many a cold expression mix'd,
With many a sneer on girls so fondly fix'd,
There came a promise—should they not repent,
But take with grateful minds the portion meant,
And wait the Sister's day—the Mother might consent

And here, might pitying hope o'er truth prevail,
Or love o'er fortune, we would end our tale.
For who more blest than youthful pair removed
From fear of want—by mutual friends approved—
Short time to wait, and in that time to live
With all the pleasures hope and fancy give;
Their equal passion raised on just esteem,
When reason sanctions all that love can dream?

Yes! reason sanctions what stern fate denies:
The early prospect in the glory dies,

As the soft smiles on dying infants play
In their mild features, and then pass away.
The *Beauty* died, ere she could yield her hand
In the high marriage by the Mother plann'd;
Who grieved indeed, but found a vast relief
In a cold heart, that ever warr'd with grief.
Lucy was present when her sister died,
Heiress to duties that she ill supplied.
There were no mutual feelings, sister arts,
No kindred taste, nor intercourse of hearts;
When in the mirror play'd the matron's smile,
The maiden's thoughts were trav'lling all the while
And when desired to speak, she sigh'd to find
Her pause offended; "Envy made her blind:
Tasteless she was, nor had a claim in life
Above the station of a rector's wife;
Yet as an heiress, she must shun disgrace,
Although no heiress to her mother's face:
It is your duty," said th' imperious dame,
"(Advanced your fortune) to advance your name,
And with superior rank, superior offers claim.
Your sister's lover, when his sorrows die,
May look upon you, and for favour sigh;
Nor can you offer a reluctant hand;
His birth is noble, and his seat is grand."
Alarm'd was Lucy, was in tears—"A fool!
Was she a child in love?—a miss at school?
Doubts any mortal, if a change of state
Dissolves all claims and ties of earlier date?"
The Rector doubted, for he came to mourn
A sister dead, and with a wife return:
Lucy with heart unchanged received the youth
True in herself, confiding in his truth:
But own'd her mother's change; the haughty dame
Pour'd strong contempt upon the youthful flame;
She firmly vow'd her purpose to pursue,
Judged her own cause, and bade the youth adieu!
The lover begg'd insisted, urged his pain,
His brother wrote to threaten and complain,
Her sister reasoning proved the promise made.
Lucy appealing to a parent prayed;
But all opposed the event that she design'd,
And all in vain—she never changed her mind;
But coldly answer'd in her wonted way,
That she "would rule, and Lucy must obey."
With peevish fear, she saw her health decline,
And cried, "Oh! monstrous, for a man to pine;
But if your foolish heart must yield to love
Let him possess it whom I now approve;

This is my pleasure:"—Still the Rector came
With larger offers and with bolder claim;
But the stern lady would attend no more—
She frown'd, and rudely pointed to the door;
Whate'er he wrote, he saw unread return'd,
And he, indignant, the dishonour spurn'd:
Nay, fix'd suspicion where he might confide,
And sacrificed his passion to his pride.

Lucy, meantime, though threaten'd and distress'd,
Against her marriage made a strong protest:
All was domestic war; the Aunt rebell'd
Against the sovereign will, and was expell'd;
And every power was tried, and every art,
To bend to falsehood one determined heart;
Assail'd, in patience it received the shock,
Soft as the wave, unshaken as the rock:
But while th' unconquer'd soul endures the storm
Of angry fate, it preys upon the form;
With conscious virtue she resisted still,
And conscious love gave vigour to her will:
But Lucy's trial was at hand; with joy
The Mother cried—"Behold your constant Loy—
Thursday—was married:—take the paper, sweet,
And read the conduct of your reverend cheat;
See with what pomp of coaches, in what crowd
The creature married—of his falsehood proud!
False, did I say?—at least no whining fool;
And thus will hopeless passions ever cool:
But shall his bride your single state reproach?
No! give him crowd for crowd, and coach for coach.
Oh! you retire; reflect then, gentle miss,
And gain some spirit in a cause like this."

Some spirit Lucy gain'd; a steady soul,
Defying all persuasion, all control:
In vain reproach, derision, threats were tried;
The constant mind all outward force defied,
By vengeance vainly urged, in vain assail'd by pride;
Fix'd in her purpose, perfect in her part,
She felt the courage of a wounded heart:
The world receded from her rising view,
When heaven approach'd as earthly things withdrew;
Not strange before, for in the days of love,
Joy, hope, and pleasure, she had thoughts above,
Pious when most of worldly prospects fond,
When they best pleased her she could look beyond.
Had the young priest a faithful lover died,
Something had been her bosom to divide;

Now heaven had all, for in her holiest views
She saw the matron whom she fear'd to lose;
While from her parent, the dejected maid
Forced the unpleasant thought, or thinking pray'd.
Surprised, the Mother saw the languid frame,
And felt indignant, yet forbore to blame.
Once with a frown she cried, "And do you mean
To die of love—the folly of fifteen?"
But as her anger met with no reply,
She let the gentle girl in quiet die;
And to her sister wrote, impell'd by pain,
"Come quickly, Martha, or you come in vain."
Lucy meantime profess'd with joy sincere,
That nothing held, employ'd, engaged her here.
"I am an humble actor, doom'd to play
A part obscure, and then to glide away:
Incurious how the great or happy shine,
Or who have parts obscure and sad as mine;
In its best prospect I but wish'd, for life,
To be th' assiduous, gentle, useful wife;
That lost, with wearied mind, and spirit poor,
I drop my efforts, and can act no more;
With growing joy I feel my spirits tend
To that last scene where all my duties end."
Hope, ease, delight, the thoughts of dying gave,
Till Lucy spoke with fondness of the grave;
She smiled with wasted form, but spirit firm,
And said, "She left but little for the worm:"
As toll'd the bell, "There's one," she said, hath press'd
"Awhile before me to the bed of rest:"
And she beside her with attention spread
The decorations of the maiden dead.
While quickly thus the mortal part declin'd,
The happiest visions fill'd the active mind;
A soft, religious melancholy gain'd
Entire possession, and for ever reign'd:
On Holy writ her mind reposing dwelt,
She saw the wonders, she the mercies felt;
Till in a blest and glorious reverie,
She seem'd the Saviour as on earth to see,
And, fill'd with love divine, th' attending friend to be:
Or she who trembling, yet confiding, stole
Near to the garment, touch'd it, and was whole;
When, such th' intenseness of the working thought,
On her it seem'd the very deed was wrought;
She the glad patient's fear and rapture found,
The holy transport, and the healing wound;
This was so fix'd, so grafted in the heart,
That she adopted, nay became the part:

But one chief scene was present to her sight,
Her Saviour resting in the tomb by night;
Her fever rose, and still her wedded mind
Was to that scene, that hallow'd cave, confin'd—
Where in the shade of death the body laid,
There watch'd the spirit of the wandering maid;
Her looks were fix'd, entranced, illumined, serene,
In the still glory of the midnight scene;
There at her Saviour's feet, in visions blest,
Th' enraptured maid a sacred joy possess'd;
In patience waiting for the first-born ray
Of that all-glorious and triumphant day:
To this idea all her soul she gave,
Her mind reposing by the sacred grave;
Then sleep would seal the eye, the vision close,
And steep the solemn thoughts in brief repose.

Then grew the soul serene, and all its powers
Again restored, illumined the dying hours:
But reason dwelt were fancy stray'd before,
And the mind wander'd from its views no more;
Till death approach'd, when every look express'd
A sense of bliss, till every sense had rest.

The Mother lives, and has enough to buy
Th' attentive ear and the submissive eye
Of abject natures—these are daily told,
How triumph'd beauty in the days of old;
How, by her window seated, crowds have cast
Admiring glances, wondering as they pass'd;
How from her carriage as she stepp'd to pray,
Divided ranks would humbly make her way;
And how each voice in the astonish'd throng
Pronounced her peerless as she moved along.

Her picture then the greedy Dame displays;
Touch'd by no shame, she now demands its praise;
In her tall mirror then she shows a face,
Still coldly fair with unaffecting grace;
These she compares, "It has the form," she cries,
"But wants the air, the spirit, and the eyes;
This, as a likeness, is correct and true,
But there alone the living grace we view."
This said, th' applauding voice the Dame required,
And, gazing, slowly from the glass retired.

TALE IX.

ARABELLA.

Thrice blessed they that master so their blood—
But earthly happier is the rose distill'd,
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.
Midsummer Night's Dream.

Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!
Much Ado about Nothing.

Of a fair town where Doctor *Rack* was guide,
His only daughter was the boast and pride;
Wise *Arabella*, yet not wise alone,
She like a bright and polish'd brilliant shone;
Her father own'd her for his prop and stay,
Able to guide, yet willing to obey;
Pleased with her learning while discourse could please
And with her love in languor and disease:
To every mother were her virtues known,
And to their daughters as a pattern shown:
Who in her youth had all that age requires,
And with her prudence, all that youth admires:
These odious praises made the damsels try
Not to obtain such merits, but deny;
For, whatsoever wise mammas might say,
To guide a daughter, this was not the way;
From such applause disdain and anger rise,
And envy lives where emulation dies.
In all his strength, contends the noble horse,
With one who just precedes him on the course
But when the rival flies too far before,
His spirit fails, and he attempts no more
This reasoning Maid, above her sex's dread,
Had dared to read, and dared to say she read:
Not the last novel, not the new-born play;
Not the mere trash and scandal of the day;
But (though her young companions felt the shock)
She studied Berkeley, Bacon, Hobbes and Locke:

Her mind within the maze of history dwelt,
And of the moral Muse the beauty felt;
The merits of the Roman page she knew,
And could converse with More and Montagu:
Thus she became the wonder of the town,
From that she reap'd, to that she gave renown,
And strangers coming, all were taught t' admire
The learned lady, and the lofty spire.

Thus Fame in public fix'd the Maid where all
Might throw their darts, and see the idol fall:
A hundred arrows came with vengeance keen,
From tongues envenom'd, and from arms unseen
A thousand eyes were fix'd upon the place,
That, if she fell, she might not fly disgrace:
But malice vainly throws the poison'd dart,
Unless our frailty shows the peccant part;
And Arabella still preserved her name
Untouch'd, and shone with undisputed fame;
Her very notice some respect would cause,
And her esteem was honour and applause.

Men she avoided: not in childish fear,
As if she thought some savage foe was near;
Not as a prude, who hides that man should seek
Or who by silence hints that they should speak
But with discretion all the sex she view'd,
Ere yet engaged pursuing or pursued:
Ere love had made her to his vices blind,
Or hid the favourite's failing from her mind.

Thus was the picture of the man portray'd,
By merit destined for so rare a maid:
At whose request she might exchange her state,
Or still be happy in a virgin's fate:—
He must be one with manners like her own,
His life unquestion'd, his opinions known;
His stainless virtue must all tests endure,
His honour spotless, and his bosom pure;
She no allowance made for sex or times,
Of lax opinion—crimes were ever crimes;
No wretch forsaken must his frailty curse,
No spurious offspring drain his private purse;
He at all times his passions must command,
And yet possess—or be refused her hand.

All this without reserve the maiden told,
And some began to weigh the rector's gold;
To ask what sum a prudent man might gain,
Who had such store of virtue to maintain?

A Doctor *Campbell*, north of Tweed, came forth,
Declared his passion, and proclaim'd his worth·

Not unapproved, for he had much to say
On every cause, and in a pleasant way;
Not all his trust was in a pliant tongue,
His form was good, and ruddy he, and young:
But though the doctor was a man of parts,
He read not deeply male or female hearts:
But judged that all whom he esteem'd as wise
Must think alike, though some assumed disguise;
That every reasoning Brahmin, Christian, Jew
Of all religions took their liberal view;
And of her own, no doubt, this learned Maid
Denied the substance, and the forms obey'd:
And thus persuaded, he his thoughts express'd
Of her opinions, and his own profess'd:
"All states demand this aid, the vulgar need
Their priests and pray'rs, their sermons and their creed;
And those of stronger minds should never speak
(In his opinion) what might hurt the weak;
A man may smile, but still he should attend
His hour at church, and be the Church's friend,
What there he thinks conceal, and what he hears
commend."

Frank was the speech, but heard with high disdain,
Nor had the doctor leave to speak again;
A man who own'd, nay gloried in deceit,
"He might despise her, but he should not cheat."

The Vicar *Holmes* appear'd: he heard it said
That ancient men best pleased the prudent maid;
And true it was her ancient friends she loved,
Servants when old she favour'd and approved,
Age in her pious parents she revered,
And neighbours were by length of days endear'd,
But, if her husband too must ancient be,
The good old vicar found it was not he.

On Captain *Bligh* her mind in balance hung—
Though valiant, modest; and reserved, though young:
Against these merits must defects be set—
Though poor, imprudent; and though proud, in debt:
In vain the captain close attention paid;
She found him wanting, whom she fairly weigh'd.

Then came a youth, and all their friends agreed,
That *Edward Huntley* was the man indeed;
Respectful duty he had paid awhile,
Then ask'd her hand, and had a gracious smile:
A lover now declared, he led the fair
To woods and fields, to visits, and to pray'r:
Then whisper'd softly—"Will you name the day?"
She softly whisper'd—"If you love me, stay:"

"Oh! try me not beyond my strength," he cried;
"Oh! oe not weak," the prudent Maid replied;
"But by some trial your affection prove—
Respect and not impatience argues love:
And love no more is by impatience known,
Than ocean's depth is by its tempests shown:
He whom a weak and fond impatience sways,
But for himself with all his fervour prays,
And not the maid he woos, but his own will obeys
And will she love the being who prefers,
With so much ardour, his desire to hers?"

Young Edward grieved, but let not grief be seen,
He knew obedience pleased his fancy's queen:
Awhile he waited, and then cried—"Behold!
The year advancing, be no longer cold!"
For she had promised—"Let the flowers appear,
"And I will pass with thee the smiling year:"
Then pressing grew the youth; the more he press'd,
The less inclined the maid to his request:
"Let June arrive,"—Alas! when April came,
It brought a stranger, and the stranger, shame;
Nor could the Lover from his house persuade
A stubborn lass whom he had mournful made;
Angry and weak, by thoughtless vengeance moved,
She told her story to the Fair beloved:
In strongest words the unwelcome truth was shown,
To blight his prospects, careless of her own.

Our heroine grieved, but had too firm a heart
For him to soften, when she swore to part;
In vain his seeming penitence and pray'r,
His vows, his tears, she left him in despair:
His mother fondly laid her grief aside,
And to the reason of the nymph appl.3d—

"It well becomes thee, lady, to appear,
But not to be, in very truth, severe;
Although the crime be odious in thy sight,
That daring sex is taught such things to slight:
His heart is thine, although it once was frail;
Think of his grief, and let his love prevail!"—

"Plead thou no more," the lofty lass return'd;
"Forgiving woman is deceived and spurn'd:
Say that the crime is common—shall I take
A common man my wedded lord to make?
See! a weak woman by his arts betray'd,
An infant born his father to upbraid:
Shall I forgive his vileness, take his name,
Sanction his error, and partake his shame?
No! this assent would kindred frailty prove,
A love for him would be a vicious love

Can a chaste maiden secret counsel hold
With one whose crime by every mouth is told?
Forbid it spirit, prudence, virtuous pride;
He must despise me, were he not denied:
The way from vice the erring mind to win
Is with presuming sinners to begin,
And show, by scorning them, a just contempt for sin."
The youth repulsed, to one more mild convey'd
His heart, and smiled on the remorseless maid;
The maid, remorseless in her pride, the while
Despised the insult, and return'd the smile.
First to admire, to praise her, and defend,
Was (now in years advanced) a virgin-friend:
"Much she preferr'd," she cried, "the single state,
It was her choice"—it surely was her fate:
And much it pleased her in the train to view
A maiden vot'ress, wise and lovely too.
Time to the yielding mind his change imparts,
He varies notions, and he alters hearts;
'Tis right, 'tis just to feel contempt for vice,
But he that shows it may be over-nice:
There are who feel, when young, the false sublime,
And proudly love to show disdain for crime;
To whom the future will new thoughts supply,
The pride will soften, and the scorn will die;
Nay, where they still the vice itself condemn,
They bear the vicious, and consort with them:
Young Captain Grove, when one had changed his side,
Despised the venal turn-coat and defied;
Old Colonel Grove now shakes him by the hand,
Though he who bribes may still his vote command:
Why would not Ellen to Belinda speak,
When she had flown to London for a week;
And then return'd, to every friend's surprise,
With twice the spirit, and with half the size?
She spoke not then—but after years had flown,
A better friend had Ellen never known:
Was it the lady her mistake had seen?
Or had she also such a journey been?
No: 'twas the gradual change in human hearts,
That time, in commerce with the world imparts;
That on the roughest temper throws disguise,
And steals from virtue her asperities.
The young and ardent, who with glowing zeal
Felt wrath for trifles, and were proud to feel,
Now find those trifles all the mind engage,
To soothe dull hours, and cheat the cares of age;
As young Zelinda, in her quaker-dress,
Disdain'd each varying fashion's vile excess,

And now her friends on old Zelinda gaze,
Pleased in rich silks and orient gems to blaze:
Changes like these 'tis folly to condemn,
So virtue yields not, nor is changed with them.
Let us proceed:—Twelve brilliant years were past
Yet each with less of glory than the last;
Whether these years to this fair virgin gave
A softer mind—effect they often have;
Whether the virgin-state was not so bless'd
As that good maiden in her zeal profess'd;
Or whether lovers falling from her train,
Gave greater price to those she could retain,
Is all unknown:—but Arabella now
Was kindly listening to a Merchant's vow;
Who offer'd terms so fair, against his love
To strive was folly, so she never strove.—
Man in his earlier days we often find
With a too easy and unguarded mind;
But by increasing years and prudence taught,
He grows reserved, and locks up every thought:
Not thus the maiden, for in blooming youth
She hides her thought and guards the tender truth:
This, when no longer young, no more she hides,
But frankly in the favour'd swain confides:
Man, stubborn man, is like the growing tree,
That, longer standing, still will harder be;
And like its fruit, the virgin first austere
Then kindly softening with the ripening year
Now was the lover urgent, and the kind
And yielding lady to his suit inclined:
"A little time, my friend, is just, is right;
We must be decent in our neighbours' sight:"
Still she allow'd him of his hopes to speak,
And in compassion took off week by week;
Till few remain'd, when, wearied with delay,
She kindly meant to take off day by day.
That female Friend who gave our virgin praise
For flying man and all his treacherous ways,
Now heard with mingled anger, shame, and fear,
Of one accepted, and a wedding near;
But she resolved again with friendly zeal
To make the maid her scorn of wedlock feel;
For she was grieved to find her work undone,
And like a sister mourn'd the falling nun.
Why are these gentle maidens prone to make
Their sister-doves the tempting world forsake?
Why all their triumph when a maid disdains
The tyrant sex, and scorns to wear its chains?

Is it pure joy to see a sister flown
From the false pleasures they themselves have known?
Or do they, as the call-birds in the cage,
Try, in pure envy, others to engage?
And therefore paint their native woods and groves,
As scenes of dangerous joys and naughty loves?
Strong was the maiden's hope: her friend was proud,
And had her notions to the world avow'd;
And, could she find the Merchant weak and frail,
With power to prove it, then she must prevail:
For she aloud would publish his disgrace,
And save his victim from a man so base.
When all inquiries had been duly made,
Came the kind Friend her burthen to unlade—
"Alas! my dear! not all our care and art
Can thread the maze of man's deceitful heart:
Look not surprise—nor let resentment swell
Those lovely features, all will yet be well;
And thou, from love's and man's deceptions free,
Wilt dwell in virgin-state, and walk to Heaven with me."
The Maiden frown'd, and then conceived "that wives
Could walk as well, and lead as holy lives
As angry prudes who scorn'd the marriage chain,
Or luckless maids, who sought it still in vain."
The Friend was vex'd—she paused: at length she cried,
"Know your own danger, then your lot decide:
That traitor Besswell, while he seeks your hand,
Has, I affirm, a wanton at command;
A slave, a creature from a foreign place,
The nurse and mother of a spurious race:
Brown ugly bastards—(Heaven the word forgive,
And the deed punish!)—in his cottage live;
To town if business calls him, there he stays
In sinful pleasures wasting countless days;
Nor doubt the facts, for I can witness call
For every crime, and prove them one and all."
Here ceased th' informer; Arabella's look
Was like a school-boy's puzzled by his book;
Intent she cast her eyes upon the floor,
Paused—then replied—
"I wish to know no more;
I question not your motive, zeal, or love,
But must decline such dubious points to prove—
All is not true, I judge, for who can guess
Those deeds of darkness men with care suppress?
He brought a slave perhaps to England's coast,
And made her free; it is our country's boast!
And she perchance too grateful—good and ill
Were sown at first, and grew together still;

The colour'd infants on the village green,
What are they more than we have often seen?
Children half-clothed who round their village stray
In sun or rain, now starved, now beaten, they
Will the dark colour of their fate betray:
Let us in Christian love for all account,
And then behold to what such tales amount."
"His heart is evil," said th' impatient Friend.
"My duty bids me try that heart to mend,"
Replied the virgin—"We may be too nice
And lose a soul in our contempt of vice;
If false the charge, I then shall show regard
For a good man, and be his just reward:
And what for virtue can I better do
Than to reclaim him, if the charge be true?"
She spoke, nor more her holy work delay'd;
'Twas time to lend an erring mortal aid:
"The noblest way," she judged, "a soul to win,
Was with an act of kindness to begin,
To make the sinner sure, and then t' attack the sin."

TALE X.

THE LOVER'S JOURNEY.

Oh! how this spring of love resembleth
Th' uncertain glory of an April day,
Which now shows all her beauty to the sun,
And by and by a cloud takes all away.
Two Gentlemen of Verona

And happily I have arrived at last
Unto the wished haven of my bliss.—*Taming of the Shrew*

It is the Soul that sees: the outward eyes
Present the object, but the Mind descries;
And thence delight, disgust, or cool indifference rise:
When minds are joyful, then we look around,
And what is seen is all on fairy ground;
Again they sicken, and on every view
Cast their own dull and melancholy hues;
Or, if absorb'd by their peculiar cares,
The vacant eye on viewless matter glares.
Our feelings still upon our views attend
And their own natures to the objects lend;
Sorrow and joy are in their influence sure,
Long as the passion reigns th' effects endure;
But love in minds his various changes makes,
And clothes each object with the change he takes;
His light and shade on every view he throws,
And on each object, what he feels, bestows.

Fair was the morning, and the month was June
When rose a Lover,—love awakens soon:
Brief his repose, yet much he dreamt the while
Of that day's meeting, and his *Laura's* smile;
Fancy and love that name assign'd to her.
Call'd Susan in the parish-register;
And he no more was John—his Laura gave
The name *Orlando* to her faithful slave.

Bright shone the glory of the rising day,
When the fond traveller took his favourite way

He mounted gaily, felt his bosom light,
And all he saw was pleasing in his sight.
"Ye hours of expectation, quickly fly,
And bring on hours of blest reality;
When I shall Laura see, beside her stand,
Hear her sweet voice, and press her yielded hand."
First o'er a barren heath beside the coast
Orlando rode, and joy began to boast.
"This neat low gorse," said he, "with golden bloom
Delights each sense, is beauty, is perfume;
And this gay ling, with all its purple flowers,
A man at leisure might admire for hours:
This green-fringed cup-moss has a scarlet tip,
That yields to nothing but my Laura's lip;
And then how fine this herbage! men may say
A heath is barren; nothing is so gay;
Barren or bare to call such charming scene
Argues a mind possess'd by care and spleen."
Onward he went, and fiercer grew the heat,
Dust rose in clouds before the horse's feet;
For now he pass'd through lanes of burning sand,
Bounds to thin crops or yet uncultured land;
Where the dark poppy flourish'd on the dry
And sterile soil, and mock'd the thin-set rye.
"How lovely this!" the rapt Orlando said;
"With what delight is labouring man repaid!
The very lane has sweets that all admire,
The rambling suckling, and the vigorous brier:
See! wholesome wormwood grows beside the way,
Where dew-press'd yet the dog-rose bends the spray
Fresh herbs the fields, fair shrubs the banks adorn,
And snow-white bloom falls flaky from the thorn;
No fostering hand they need, no sheltering wall,
They spring uncultured, and they bloom for all."
The lover rode as hasty lovers ride,
And reach'd a common pasture wild and wide;
Small black-legg'd sheep devour with hunger keen
The meagre herbage, fleshless, lank, and lean:
Such o'er thy level turf, Newmarket! stray,
And there, with other *black-legs*, find their prey:
He saw some scatter'd hovels; turf was piled
In square brown stacks; a prospect bleak and wild
A mill, indeed, was in the centre found,
With short sear herbage withering all around;
A smith's black shed opposed a wright's long shop,
And join'd an inn where humble travellers stop.
"Ay, this is Nature," said the Gentle 'Squire;
"This ease, peace, pleasure—who would not admire?"

With what delight these sturdy children play,
And joyful rusties at the close of day;
Sport follows labour, on these even space
Will soon commence the wrestling and the race
Then will the village maidens leave their home,
And to the dance with buoyant spirits come;
No affectation in their looks is seen,
Nor know they what disguise or flattery mean
Nor aught to move an envious pang they see,
Easy their service, and their love is free:
Hence early springs that love, it long endures,
And life's first comfort, while they live, ensures:
They the low roof and rustic comforts prize,
Nor cast on prouder mansions envying eyes:
Sometimes the news at yonder town they hear
And learn what busier mortals feel and hear;
Secure themselves, although by tales amazed,
Of towns bombarded and of cities razed;
As if they doubted in their still retreat,
The very news that makes their quiet sweet.
And their days happy—happier only knows
He on whom Laura her regard bestows."

On rode Orlando, counting all the while
The miles he pass'd and every coming mile;
Like all attracted things, he quicker flies,
The place approaching where th' attraction lies;
When next appear'd a *dam*—so call the place—
Where lies a road confined in narrow space;
A work of labour, for on either side
Is level fen, a prospect wild and wide,
With dikes on either hand by ocean's self supplied
Far on the right the distant sea is seen,
And salt the springs that feed the marsh between;
Beneath an ancient bridge, the straiten'd flood
Rolls through its sloping banks of slimy mud;
Near it a sunken boat resists the tide,
That frets and hurries to th' opposing side
The rushes sharp, that on the borders grow,
Bend their brown flow'rets to the stream below,
Impure in all its course, in all its progress slow:
Here a grave Flora scarcely deigns to bloom,
Nor wears a rosy blush, nor sheds perfume;
The few dull flowers that o'er the place are spread
Partake the nature of their fenny bed;
Here on its wiry stem, in rigid bloom,
Grow the salt lavender that lacks perfume;
Here the dwarf sallows creep, the septfoil harsh,
And the soft slimy mallow of the marsh.

Low on the ear the distant billows sound,
And just in view appears their stony bound;
No hedge nor tree conceals the glowing sun,
Birds, save a wat'ry tribe, the district shun,
Nor chirp among the reeds where bitter waters run.
"Various as beauteous, Nature, is thy face,"
Exclaim'd Orlando: "all that grows has grace;
"All are appropiate—bog, and marsh, and fen,
Are only poor to undiscerning men;
Here may the nice and curious eye explore
How Nature's hand adorns the rushy moor;
Here the rare moss in secret shade is found,
Here the sweet myrtle of the shaking ground;
Beauties are these that from the view retire,
But well repay th' attention they require:
For these, my Laura will her home forsake,
And all the pleasures they afford partake."
Again, the country was enclosed, a wide
And sandy road has banks on either side;
Where lo! a hollow on the left appear'd,
And there a Gipsy-tribe their tent had rear'd:
'Twas open spread, to catch the morning sun,
And they had now their early meal begun,
When two brown boys just left their grassy seat,
The early Trav'ller with their prayers to greet:
While yet Orlando held his pence in hand,
He saw their sister on her duty stand;
Some twelve years old, demure, affected, sly,
Prepared the force of early powers to try;
Sudden a look of languor he descries,
And well-feigned apprehension in her eyes;
Train'd but yet savage, in her speaking face
He mark'd the features of her vagrant race;
When a light laugh and roguish leer express'd
The vice implanted in her youthful breast:
Forth from the tent her elder brother came,
Who seem'd offended, yet forbore to blame
The young designer, but could only trace
The looks of pity in the Trav'ller's face:
Within, the Father, who from fences nigh
Had brought the fuel for the fire's supply,
Watch'd now the feeble blaze, and stood dejected by
On ragged rug, just borrow'd from the bed,
And by the hand of coarse indulgence fed,
In dirty patchwork negligently dress'd,
Reclin'd the Wife, an infant at her breast;
In her wild face some touch of grace remain'd,
Of vigour palsied and of beauty stain'd;

Her blood-shot eyes on her unheeding mate
Were wrathful turn'd, and seemed her wants to state
Cursing his tardy aid—her Mother there
With gipsy-state engross'd the only chair;
Solemn and dull her look; with such she stands,
And reads the milk-maid's fortune in her hands,
Tracing the lines of life; assumed through years,
Each feature now the steady falsehood wears:
With hard and savage eye she views the food,
And grudging pinches their intruding brood;
Last in the group, the worn-out Grandsire sits
Neglected, lost, and living but by fits;
Useless, despised, his worthless labours done,
And half protected by the vicious Son,
Who half supports him; he with heavy glance
Views the young ruffians who around him dance;
And, by the sadness in his face, appears
To trace the progress of their future years:
Through what strange course of misery, vice, deceit
Must wildly wander each unpractised cheat!
What shame and grief, what punishment and pain,
Sport of fierce passions, must each child sustain—
Ere they like him approach their latter end,
Without a hope, a comfort, or a friend!

But this Orlando felt not; "Rogues," said he,
"Doubtless they are, but merry rogues they be;
They wander round the land, and be it true,
They break the laws—then let the laws pursue
The wanton idlers; for the life they live,
Acquit I cannot, but I can forgive."
This said, a portion from his purse was thrown,
And every heart seem'd happy like his own.

He hurried forth, for now the town was nigh—
"The happiest man of mortal men am I."
Thou art! but change in every state is near,
(So while the wretched hope, the blest may fear):
"Say, where is Laura?"—"That her words must show"
A lass replied; "read this, and thou shalt know!"

"What, gone!"—her friend insisted—forced to go:—
"Is vex'd, was teased, could not refuse her!—No?
"But you can follow;" "Yes:" "The miles are few,
The way is pleasant: will you come?—Adieu!
Thy Laura!" "No! I feel I must resign
The pleasing hope, thou hadst been here, if mine:
A lady was it?—Was no brother there?
But why should I afflict me, if there were?"
"The way is pleasant:" "What to me the way?
I cannot reach her till the close of day.

My dumb companion! is it thus we speed?
Not I from grief nor thou from toil art freed:
Still art thou doom'd to travel and to pine,
For my vexation—what a fate is mine!
"Gone to a friend, she tells me;—I commend
Her purpose: means she to a female friend?
By Heaven, I wish she suffer'd half the pain
Of hope protracted through the day in vain:
Shall I persist to see th' ungrateful maid?
Yes, I will see her, slight her, and upbraid:
What! in the very hour? She knew the time,
And doubtless chose it to increase her crime.'
Forth rode Orlando by a river's side,
Inland and winding, smooth, and full and wide,
That roll'd majestic on, in one soft flowing tide;
The bottom gravel, flow'ry were the banks,
Tall willows, waving in their broken ranks:
The road, now near, now distant, winding led
By lovely meadows which the waters fed:
He pass'd the way-side inn, the village spire,
Nor stopp'd to gaze, to question, or admire:
On either side the rural mansions stood,
With hedge-row trees, and hills high crown'd with wood
And many a devious stream that reach'd the nobler flood.
"I hate these scenes," Orlando angry cried,
"And these proud farmers! yes, I hate their pride
See! that sleek fellow, how he strides along,
Strong as an ox, and ignorant as strong;
Can you close crops a single eye detain
But he who counts the profits of the grain?
And these vile beans with detestable smell,
Where is their beauty? can a mortal tell?
These deep fat meadows I detest: it shocks
One's feelings there to see the grazing ox;—
For slaughter fatted, as a lady's smile
Rejoices man, and means his death the while.
Lo! now the sons of labour! every day
Employ'd in toil, and vex'd in every way:
Their's is but mirth assumed, and they conceal,
In their affected joys, the ills they feel:
I hate these long green lanes; there's nothing seen
In this vile country but eternal green;
Woods! waters! meadows! Will they never end?
'Tis a vile prospect:—Gone to see a friend!"
Still on he rode! a mansion fair and tall
Rose on his view—the pride of Loddon Hall
Spread o'er the park he saw the grazing steer
The full-fed steed, and herds of bounding deer:

Her blood-shot eyes on her unheeding mate
Were wrathful turn'd, and seemed her wants to state
Cursing his tardy aid—her Mother there
With gipsy-state engross'd the only chair;
Solemn and dull her look; with such she stands,
And reads the milk-maid's fortune in her hands,
Tracing the lines of life; assumed through years,
Each feature now the steady falsehood wears:
With hard and savage eye she views the food,
And grudging pinches their intruding brood;
Last in the group, the worn-out Grandsire sits
Neglected, lost, and living but by fits;
Useless, despised, his worthless labours done,
And half protected by the vicious Son,
Who half supports him; he with heavy glance
Views the young ruffians who around him dance;
And, by the sadness in his face, appears
To trace the progress of their future years:
Through what strange course of misery, vice, deceit
Must wildly wander each unpractised cheat!
What shame and grief, what punishment and pain,
Sport of fierce passions, must each child sustain—
Ere they like him approach their latter end,
Without a hope, a comfort, or a friend!

But this Orlando felt not: "Rogues," said he,
"Doubtless they are, but merry rogues they be;
They wander round the land, and be it true,
They break the laws—then let the laws pursue
The wanton idlers; for the life they live,
Acquit I cannot, but I can forgive."
This said, a portion from his purse was thrown,
And every heart seem'd happy like his own.

He hurried forth, for now the town was nigh—
"The happiest man of mortal men am I."
Thou art! but change in every state is near,
(So while the wretched hope, the blest may fear):
"Say, where is Laura?"—"That her words must show"
A lass replied; "read this, and thou shalt know!"

"What, gone!"—her friend insisted—forced to go:—
"Is vex'd, was teased, could not refuse her!—No?
"But you can follow;" "Yes:" "The miles are few,
The way is pleasant; will you come?—Adieu!
Thy Laura!" "No! I feel I must resign
The pleasing hope, thou hadst been here, if mine:
A lady was it?—Was no brother there?
But why should I afflict me, if there were?"
"The way is pleasant:" "What to me the way?
I cannot reach her till the close of day.

My dumb companion! is it thus we speed?
Not I from grief nor thou from toil art freed:
Still art thou doom'd to travel and to pine,
For my vexation—what a fate is mine!
"Gone to a friend, she tells me;—I commend
Her purpose: means she to a female friend?
By Heaven, I wish she suffer'd half the pain
Of hope protracted through the day in vain:
Shall I persist to see th' ungrateful maid?
Yes, I will see her, slight her, and upbraid:
What! in the very hour? She knew the time,
And doubtless chose it to increase her crime.'
Forth rode Orlando by a river's side,
Inland and winding, smooth, and full and wide,
That roll'd majestic on, in one soft flowing tide;
The bottom gravel, flow'ry were the banks,
Tall willows, waving in their broken ranks:
The road, now near, now distant, winding led
By lovely meadows which the waters fed:
He pass'd the way-side inn, the village spire,
Nor stopp'd to gaze, to question, or admire:
On either side the rural mansions stood,
With hedge-row trees, and hills high-crown'd with wood
And many a devious stream that reach'd the noble flood
"I hate these scenes," Orlando angry cried,
"And these proud farmers! yes, I hate their pride
See! that sleek fellow, how he strides along,
Strong as an ox, and ignorant as strong;
Can yon close crops a single eye detain
But he who counts the profits of the grain?
And these vile beans with deleterious smell,
Where is their beauty? can a mortal tell?
These deep fat meadows I detest; it shocks
One's feelings there to see the grazing ox;—
For slaughter fatted, as a lady's smile
Rejoices man, and means his death the while.
Lo! now the sons of labour! every day
Employ'd in toil, and vex'd in every way:
Their's is but mirth assumed, and they conceal,
In their affected joys, the ills they feel:
I hate these long green lanes; there's nothing seen
In this vile country but eternal green:
Woods! waters! meadows! Will they never end?
'Tis a vile prospect:—Gone to see a friend!"
Still on he rode! a mansion fair and tall
Rose on his view—the pride of Loddon Hall
Spread o'er the park he saw the grazing steer
The full-fed steed, and herds of bounding deer:

TALE XI.

EDWARD SHORE.

——Seem they grave or learned?
Why, so didst thou—Seem they religious?
Why, so didst thou; or are they spare in diet,
Free from gross passion, or of mirth or anger,
Constant in spirit, not swerving with the blood,
Garnish'd and deck'd in modest compliment,
Not working with the eye without the ear,
And but with purged judgment trusting neither?
Such and so finely bolted didst thou seem.—*Henry V.*

GENIUS! thou gift of Heav'n! thou light divine!
Amid what dangers art thou doom'd to shine!
Oft will the body's weakness check thy force,
Oft damp thy vigour, and impede thy course;
And trembling nerves compel thee to restrain
Thy nobler efforts, to contend with pain:
Or Want (sad guest!) will in thy presence come,
And breathe around her melancholy gloom:
To life's low cares will thy proud thought confine,
And make her sufferings, her impatience, thine.
Evil and strong, seducing passions prey
On soaring minds, and win them from their way,
Who then to Vice the subject spirits give,
And in the service of the conqu'ror live:
Like captive Samson making sport for all,
Who fear'd their strength, and glory in their fall.
Genius, with virtue, still may lack the aid
Implored by humble minds, and hearts afraid:
May leave to timid souls the shield and sword
Of the tried Faith, and the resistless Word;
Amid a world of dangers venturing forth,
Frail, but yet fearless, proud in conscious worth
Till strong temptation, in some fatal time,
Assails the heart, and wins the soul to crime
When left by honour, and by sorrow spent,
Unused to pray, unable to repent.
The nobler powers that once exalted high
Th' aspiring man, shall then degraded lie;

Reason, through anguish, shall her throne forsake,
And strength of mind but stronger madness make.

When *Edward Shore* had reached his twentieth year
He felt his bosom light, his conscience clear;
Applause at school the youthful hero gain'd,
And trials there with manly strength sustain'd:
With prospects bright upon the world he came,
Pure love of virtue, strong desire of fame:
Men watch'd the way his lofty mind would take,
And all foretold the progress he would make.

Boast of these friends, to older men a guide,
Proud of his parts, but gracious in his pride;
He bore a gay good nature in his face,
And in his air were dignity and grace,
Dress that became his state and years he wore,
And sense and spirit shone in Edward Shore.

Thus, while admiring friends the Youth beheld,
His own disgust their forward hopes repell'd;
For he unfix'd, unfixing, look'd around,
And no employment but in seeking found;
He gave his restless thoughts to views refined,
And shrank from worldly cares with wounded mind.

Rejecting trade, awhile he dwelt on laws,
"But who could plead, if unapproved the cause?"
A doubting, dismal tribe physicians seem'd;
Divines o'er texts and disputations dream'd;
War and its glory he perhaps could love,
But there again he must the cause approve.

Our hero thought no deed should gain applause
Where timid virtue found support in laws,
He to all good would soar, would fly all sin,
By the pure prompting of the will within;
"Who needs a law that binds him not to steal?"
Ask'd the young teacher; "can he rightly feel?
To curb the will, or arm in honour's cause,
Or aid the weak—are these enforced by laws?
Should we a foul, ungenerous action dread,
Because a law condemns th' adulterous bed?
Or fly pollution, not for fear of stain,
But that some statute tells us to refrain?
The grosser herd in ties like these we bind,
In virtue's freedom moves th' enlighten'd mind."

"Man's heart deceives him," said a friend.—"Of course,"
Replied the Youth; "but has it power to force?
Unless it forces, call it as you will,
It is but wish, and proneness to the ill."

"Art thou not tempted?"—"Do I fall?" said Shore—
"The pure have fallen."—"Then are pure no more."

While Reason guides me, I shall walk aright,
Nor need a steadier hand, or stronger light;
Nor this in dread of awful threats, design'd
For the weak spirit and the grov'ling mind;
But that, engaged by thoughts and views sublime
I wage free war with grossness and with crime."
Thus look'd he proudly on the vulgar crew,
Whom statutes govern, and whom fears subdue.

Faith, with his virtue, he indeed profess'd,
But doubts deprived his ardent mind of rest;
Reason, his sovereign mistress, fail'd to show,
Light through the mazes of the world below:
Questions arose, and they surpass'd the skill
Of his sole aid, and would be dubious still;
These to discuss he sought no common guide,
But to the doubters in his doubts applied;
When all together might in freedom speak,
And their loved truth with mutual ardour seek.
Alas! though men who feel their eyes decay,
Take more than common pains to find their way,
Yet, when for this they ask each other's aid,
Their mutual purpose is the more delay'd:
Of all their doubts, their reasoning clear'd not one,
Still the same spots were present in the sun;
Still the same scruples haunted Edward's mind,
Who found no rest, nor took the means to find.

But though with shaken faith, and slave to fame,
Vain and aspiring on the world he came;
Yet was he studious, serious, moral, grave,
No passion's victim, and no system's slave:
Vice he opposed, indulgence he disdain'd,
And o'er each sense in conscious triumph reign'd.

Who often reads, will sometimes wish to write,
And Shore would yield instruction and delight:
A serious drama he design'd, but found
'T was tedious travelling in that gloomy ground;
A deep and solemn story he would try,
But grew ashamed of ghosts, and laid it by;
Sermons he wrote, but they who knew his creed,
Or knew it not, were ill disposed to read;
And he would lastly be the nation's guide,
But, studying, fail'd to fix upon a side;
Fame he desired, and talents he possess'd,
But loved not labour, though he could not rest,
Nor firmly fix the vacillating mind,
That, ever working, could no centre find.

'Tis thus a sanguine reader loves to trace
The Nile forth rushing on his glorious race;

Calm and secure the fancied traveller goes
Through sterile deserts and by threat'ning foes;
He thinks not then of Afric's scorching sands,
Th' Arabian sea, the Abyssinian bands;
Fasils and Michaels, and the robbers all,
Whom we politely chiefs and heroes call:
He of success alone delights to think,
He views that fount, he stands upon the brink,
And drinks a fancied draught, exulting so to drink.

In his own room, and with his books around,
His lively mind its chief employment found·
Then idly busy, quietly employ'd,
And, lost to life, his visions were enjoy'd:
Yet still he took a keen enquiring view
Of all that crowds neglect, desire, pursue;
And thus abstracted, curious, still, serene,
He unemploy'd, beheld life s shifting scene;
Still more averse from vulgar joys and cares,
Still more unfitted for the world's affairs.

There was a house where Edward ofttimes went,
And social hours in pleasant trifling spent:
He read, conversed, and reason d, sang and play'd
And all were happy while the idler stay'd;
Too happy one! for thence arose the pain
Till this engaging triller came again.

But did he love? We answer, day by day,
The loving feet would take th' accustom'd way,
The amorous eye would rove as if in quest
Of something rare, and on the mansion rest;
The same soft passion touch'd the gentle tongue,
And *Anna's* charms in tender notes were sung;
The ear, too, seem'd to feel the common flame,
Soothed and delighted with the fair one's name;
And thus as love each other part possess'd,
The heart, no doubt, its sovereign power confess'd.

Pleased in her sight, the Youth required no more;
Not rich himself, he saw the damsel poor;
And he too wisely, nay, too kindly loved,
To pain the being whom his soul approved.

A serious Friend our cautious Youth possess'd,
And at his table sat a welcome guest;
Both unemploy'd, it was their chief delight
To read what free and daring authors write;
Authors who loved from common views to soar,
And seek the fountains never traced before:
Truth they profess'd, yet often left the true
And beaten prospect, for the wild and new.
His chosen friend his fiftieth year had seen,
His fortune easy, and his air serene:

Deist and atheist call'd: for few agreed
What were his notions, principles, or creed
His mind reposed not, for he hated rest
But all things made a query or a jest;
Perplex'd himself, he ever sought to prove
That man is doom'd in endless doubt to rove:
Himself in darkness he profess'd to be,
And would maintain that not a man could see.

The youthful Friend, dissentient, reason'd still
Of the soul's prowess, and the subject-will;
Of virtue's beauty, and of honour's force,
And a warm zeal gave life to his discourse:
Since from his feelings all his fire arose,
And he had interest in the theme she chose.

The Friend, indulging a sarcastic smile,
Said—"Dear enthusiast! thou wilt change thy style
When man's delusions, errors, crimes, deceit,
No more distress thee, and no longer cheat."

Yet, lo! this cautious man, so coolly wise,
On a young Beauty fix'd unguarded eyes;
And her he married: Edward at the view
Bade to his cheerful visits long adieu;
But haply err'd, for this engaging bride
No mirth suppress'd, but rather cause supplied:
And when she saw the friends, by reasoning long,
Confused if right, and positive if wrong,
With playful speech and smile, that spoke delight,
She made them careless both of wrong and right.

This gentle damsel gave consent to wed,
With school and school-day dinners in her head:
She now was promised choice of daintiest food,
And costly dress, that made her sovereign good;
With walks on hilly heath to banish spleen,
And summer-visits when the roads were clean.
All these she loved, to these she gave consent,
And she was married to her heart's content.

Their manner this—the Friends together read,
Till books a cause for disputation bred:
Debate then follow'd, and the vapour'd child
Declared they argued till her head was wild;
And strange to her it was that mortal brain
Could seek the trial, or endure the pain.

Then as the Friend reposed, the younger pair
Sat down to cards, and play'd beside his chair:
Till he awaking, to his books applied,
Or heard the music of th' obedient bride:
If mild the evening, in the fields they stray'd,
And their own flock with partial eye survey'd

But oft the husband, to indulgence prone,
Resumed his book, and bade them walk alone.
"Do, my kind Edward! I must take mine ease,
Name the dear girl, the planets and the trees;
Tell her what warblers pour their evening song,
What insects flutter, as you walk along;
Teach her to fix the roving thoughts, to bind
The wandering sense, and methodise the mind."
This was obey'd; and oft when this was done,
They calmly gazed on the declining sun;
In silence saw the glowing landscape fade,
Or, sitting, sang beneath the arbour's shade:
Till rose the moon, and on each youthful face
Shed a soft beauty, and a dangerous grace.
When the young Wife beheld in long debate
The friends, all careless as she seeming sate;
It soon appear'd, there was in one combined
The nobler person, and the richer mind:
He wore no wig, no grisly beard was seen,
And none beheld him careless or unclean;
Or watch'd him sleeping. We indeed have heard
Of sleeping beauty, and it has appear'd;
'T is seen in infants—there indeed we find
The features soften'd by the slumbering mind;
But other beauties, when disposed to sleep,
Should from the eye of keen inspector keep:
The lovely nymph who would her swain surprise
May close her mouth, but not conceal her eyes;
Sleep from the fairest face some beauty takes,
And all the homely features homelier makes;
So thought our wife, beholding with a sigh
Her sleeping spouse, and Edward smiling by.
A sick relation for the husband sent:
Without delay the friendly sceptic went;
Nor fear'd the youthful pair, for he had seen
The wife untroubled, and the friend serene;
No selfish purpose in his roving eyes,
No vile deception in her fond replies:
So judged the husband, and with judgment true,
For neither yet the guilt or danger knew.
What now remain'd? but they again should play
Th' accustom'd game, and walk th' accustom'd way;
With careless freedom should converse or read,
And the Friend's absence neither fear nor heed:
But rather now they seem'd confused, constrain'd;
Within their room still restless they remain'd,
And painfully they felt, and knew each other pain'd.—

Ah, foolish men! how could ye thus depend,
One on himself, the other on his friend?
The Youth with troubled eye the lady saw,
Yet felt too brave, too daring to withdraw:
While she, with tuneless hand the jarring keys
Touching, was not one moment at her ease:
Now would she walk, and call her friendly guide,
Now speak of rain, and cast her cloak aside,
Seize on a book, unconscious what she read,
And restless still to new resources fled;
Then laugh'd aloud, then tried to look serene;
And ever changed, and every change was seen.
Painful it is to dwell on deeds of shame—
The trying day was past, another came;
The third was all remorse, confusion, dread,
And (all too late!) the fallen hero fled.
Then felt the Youth, in that seducing time,
How feebly Honour guards the heart from crime
Small is his native strength; man needs the stay
The strength imparted in the trying day;
For all that Honour brings against the force
Of headlong passion, aids its rapid course;
Its slight resistance but provokes the fire
As wood-work stops the flame, and then conveys it higher.
The Husband came: the wife by guilt made bold
Had, meeting, soothed him, as in days of old;
But soon this fact transpired; her strong distress,
And his Friend's absence, left him nought to guess.
Still cool, though grieved, thus prudence bade him write—
"I cannot pardon, and I will not fight;
Thou art too poor a culprit for the laws,
And I too faulty to support my cause.
All must be punish'd; I must sigh alone,
At home thy victim for her guilt atone;
And thou, unhappy! virtuous now no more,
Must loss of fame, peace, purity deplore;
Sinners with praise will pierce thee to the heart,
And saints deriding, tell thee what thou art."
Such was his fall; and Edward, from that time,
Felt in full force the censure and the crime—
Despis'd, asham'd; his noble views before,
And his proud thoughts, degraded him the more:
Should he repent—would that conceal his shame?
Could peace be his? It perished with his fame:
Himself he scorn'd, nor could his crime forgive;
He fear'd to die, yet felt asham'd to live:

Grieved, but not contrite was his heart; oppress'd,
Not broken; not converted, but distress'd;
He wanted will to bend the stubborn knee,
He wanted light the cause of ill to see,
To learn how frail is man, how humble then should be
For faith he had not, or a faith too weak
To gain the help that humbled sinners seek;
Else had he pray'd—to an offended God
His tears had flown a penitential flood;
Though far astray, he would have heard the call
Of mercy—"Come! return, thou prodigal;"
Then, though confused, distress'd, ashamed, afraid,
Still had the trembling penitent obey'd;
Though faith had fainted, when assail'd by fear,
Hope to the soul had whisper'd, "Persevere!"
Till in his Father's house an humbled guest,
He would have found forgiveness, comfort, rest.

But all this joy was to our Youth denied
By his fierce passions, and his daring pride;
And shame and doubt impell'd him in a course,
Once so abhor'd, with unresisted force.
Proud minds and guilty, whom their crimes oppress,
Fly to new crimes for comfort and redress;
So found our fallen Youth a short relief
In wine, the opiate guilt appears to grief.—
From fleeting mirth that o'er the bottle lives,
From the false joy its inspiration gives:
And from associates pleased to find a friend,
With powers to lead them, gladden, and defend,
In all those scenes where transient ease is found,
For minds whom sins oppress, and sorrows wound.

Wine is like anger; for it makes us strong,
Blind and impatient, and it leads us wrong:
The strength is quickly lost, we feel the error long:
Thus led, thus strengthen'd, in an evil cause,
For folly pleading, sought the Youth applause;
Sad for a time, then eloquently wild,
He gaily spoke as his companion smiled;
Lightly he rose, and with his former grace
Proposed some doubt, and argued on the case;
Fate and fore-knowledge were his favourite themes—
How vain man's purpose, how absurd his schemes:
"Whatever is, was ere our birth decreed;
We think our actions from ourselves proceed,
And idly we lament th' inevitable deed;
It seems our own, but there's a power above
Directs the motion, ay, that makes us move;

Nor good nor evil can you beings name,
Who are but rooks and castles in the game;
Superior natures with their puppets play,
Till, bagg'd or buried, all are swept away."
Such were the notions of a mind to ill
Now prone, but ardent, and determined still:
Of joy now eager, as before of fame,
And screen'd by folly when assail'd by shame,
Deeply he sank; obey'd each passion's call,
And used his reason to defend them all.
Shall I proceed, and step by step relate
The odious progress of a sinner's fate?
No—let me rather hasten to the time
(Sure to arrive!) when misery waits on crime.
With Virtue, prudence fled; what Shore possess'd
Was sold, was spent, and he was now distress'd;
And Want, unwelcome stranger, pale and wan,
Met with her haggard looks the hurried man;
His pride felt keenly what he must expect
From useless pity and from cold neglect.
Struck by new terrors, from his friends he fled,
And wept his woes upon a restless bed;
Retiring late, at early hour to rise,
With shrunken features, and with bloodshot eyes
If sleep one moment closed the dismal view,
Fancy her terrors built upon the true:
And night and day had their alternate woes,
That baffled pleasure, and that mock'd repose;
Till to despair and anguish was consign'd
The wreck and ruin of a noble mind.
Now seized for debt, and lodged within a jail,
He tried his friendships, and he found them fail;
Then fail'd his spirits, and his thoughts were all
Fix'd on his sins, his sufferings, and his fall:
His ruffled mind was pictured in his face,
Once the fair seat of dignity and grace:
Great was the danger of a man so prone
To think of madness, and to think alone;
Yet pride still lived, and struggled to sustain
The drooping spirit, and the roving brain:
But this too fail'd: a Friend his freedom gave,
And sent him help the threat'ning world to brave
Gave solid counsel what to seek or flee,
But still would stranger to his person be:
In vain! the truth determined to explore,
He traced the Friend whom he had wrong'd before.
This was too much; both aided and advised
By one who shunn'd him, pitied, and despised:

He bore it not: 't was a deciding stroke,
And on his reason like a torrent broke:
In dreadful stillness he appear'd awhile,
With vacant horror and a ghastly smile;
Then rose at once into the frantic rage,
That force controll'd not, nor could love assuage.
Friends now appear'd, but in the Man was seen
The angry Maniac, with vindictive mien;
Too late their pity gave to care and skill
The hurried mind and ever-wandering will;
Unnoticed pass'd all time, and not a ray
Of reason broke on his benighted way;
But now he spurn'd the straw in pure disdain,
And now laugh'd loudly at the clinking chain.
Then as its wrath subsided, by degrees
The mind sank slowly to infantine ease;
To playful folly, and to causeless joy,
Speech without aim, and without end, employ;
He drew fantastic figures on the wall,
And gave some wild relation of them all;
With brutal shape he join'd the human face,
And idiot smiles approved the motley race.
Harmless at length th' unhappy man was found,
The spirit settled, but the reason drown'd;
And all the dreadful tempest died away,
To the dull stillness of the misty day.
And now his freedom he attain'd,—if free
The lost to reason, truth, and hope can be;
His friends, or wearied with the charge, or sure
The harmless wretch was now beyond a cure,
Gave him to wander where he pleased, and find
His own resources for the eager mind:
The playful children of the place he meets,
Playful with them he rambles through the streets
In all they need, his stronger arm he lends,
And his lost mind to these approving friends.
That gentle Maid, whom once the Youth had loved
Is now with mild religious pity moved:
Kindly she chides his boyish flights, while he
Will for a moment fix'd and pensive be;
And as she trembling speaks, his lively eyes
Explore her looks, he listens to her sighs;
Charm'd by her voice, th' harmonious sounds invade
His clouded mind, and for a time persuade:
Like a pleased infant, who has newly caught
From the maternal glance a gleam of thought;
He stands enrapt, the half known voice to hear,
And starts, half conscious, at the falling tear.

Rarely from town, nor then unwatch'd, he goes,
In darker mood, as if to hide his woes;
Returning soon, he with impatience seeks
His youthful friends, and shouts, and sings, and speaks
Speaks a wild speech with action all as wild—
The children's leader, and himself a child;
He spins their top, or, at their biddings, bends
His back, while o'er it leap his laughing friends;
Simple and weak, he acts the boy once more
And heedless children call him *Silly Moore*.

TALE XII.

SQUIRE THOMAS;

OR,

THE PRECIPITATE CHOICE.

——— Such smiling rogues as these,
Like rats, oft bite the holy cords in twain,
Too intrinsicate t' unloose *Lear.*

If I do not have pity upon her, I 'm a villain;
If I do not love her, I am a Jew.
Much Ado about Nothing.

Women are soft, mild, pitiable, flexible;
But thou art obdurate, flinty, rough, remorseless.
Henry VI.

SQUIRE THOMAS flatter'd long a wealthy Aunt,
Who left him all that she could give or grant;
Ten years he tried, with all his craft and skill,
To fix the sovereign lady's varying will;
Ten years enduring at her board to sit,
He meekly listen'd to her tales and wit;
He took the meanest office man can take,
And his aunt's vices for her money's sake:
By many a threat'ning hint she waked his fear,
And he was pain'd to see a rival near;
Yet all the taunts of her contemptuous pride
He bore, nor found his grov'ling spirit tried;
Nay, when she wish'd his parents to traduce,
Fawning he smiled, and justice call'd th abuse:
"They taught you nothing, are you not, at best,"
Said the proud Dame, "a triller and a jest?
Confess you are a fool!"—he bow'd and he confess'd.
This vex'd him much, but could not always last
The dame is buried, and the trial past.
There was a female, who had courted long
Her cousin's gifts, and deeply felt the wrong·

By a vain boy forbidden to attend
The private councils of her wealthy friend.
She vow'd revenge, nor should that crafty boy
In triumph undisturb'd his spoils enjoy:
He heard, he smiled, and when the Will was read
Kindly dismiss'd the Kindred of the dead;
"The dear deceased," he call'd her, and the crowd
Moved off with curses deep and threat'nings loud.

The Youth retired, and, with a mind at ease,
Found he was rich, and fancied he must please:
He might have pleased, and to his comfort found
The wife he wish'd, if he had sought around;
For there were lasses of his own degree,
With no more hatred to the state than he:
But he had courted spleen and age so long,
His heart refused to woo the fair and young;
So long attended on caprice and whim,
He thought attention now was due to him;
And as his flattery pleased the wealthy Dame,
Heir to the wealth, he might the flattery claim,
But this the fair, with one accord, denied,
Nor waved for man's caprice the sex's pride:
There is a season when to them is due
Worship and awe, and they will claim it too:
"Fathers," they cry, "long hold us in their chain,
Nay, tyrant brothers claim a right to reign;
Uncles and guardians we in turn obey,
And husbands rule with ever-during sway;
Short is the time when lovers at the feet
Of beauty kneel, and own the slavery sweet;
And shall we this our triumph, this the aim
And boast of female power, forbear to claim?
No! we demand that homage, that respect,
Or the proud rebel punish and reject."

Our Hero, still too indolent, too nice,
To pay for beauty the accustom'd price,
No less forbore t' address the humbler maid,
Who might have yielded with the price unpaid;
But lived, himself to humour and to please,
To count his money, and enjoy his ease.

It pleased a neighbouring 'squire to recommend,
A faithful youth, as servant to his friend:
Nay, more than servant, whom he praised for parts
Ductile yet strong, and for the best of hearts;
One who might ease him in his small affairs
With tenants, tradesmen, taxes and repairs,
Answer his letters, look to all his dues,
And entertain him with discourse and news.

The 'Squire believed, and found the trusted youth
A very pattern for his care and truth;
Not for his virtues to be praised alone,
But for a modest mein and humble tone;
Assenting always, but as if he meant
Only to strength of reasons to assent:
For was he stubborn, and retain'd his doubt,
Till the more subtle 'Squire had forced it out;
"Nay, still was right, but he perceived that strong
And powerful minds could make the right the wrong."
When the 'Squire's thoughts on some fair damsel dwelt
The faithful Friend his apprehensions felt;
It would rejoice his faithful heart to find
A lady suited to his master's mind;
But who deserved that master? who would prove
That hers was pure, uninterested love?
Although a servant, he would scorn to take
A countess, till she suffer'd for his sake;
Some tender spirit, humble, faithful, true
Such, my dear master! must be sought for you
Six months had pass'd, and not a lady seen,
With just this love, 'twixt fifty and fifteen;
All seem'd his doctrine or his pride to shun,
All would be woo'd, before they would be won;
When the chance naming of a race and fair,
Our 'Squire disposed to take his pleasure there:
The Friend profess'd, "although he first began
To hint the thing, it seem'd a thoughtless plan;
The roads, he fear'd, were foul, the days were short
The village far, and yet there might be sport."
"What! you of roads and starless nights afraid?
You think to govern! you to be obey'd!"
Smiling he spoke, the humble Friend declared
His soul's obedience, and to go prepared.
The place was distant, but with great delight
They saw a race, and hail'd the glorious sight:
The 'Squire exulted, and declared the ride
Had amply paid, and he was satisfied.
They gazed, they feasted, and, in happy mood,
Homeward return'd, and hastening as they rode:
For short the day, and sudden was the change
From light to darkness, and the way was strange:
Our hero soon grew peevish, then distress'd;
He dreaded darkness, and he sigh'd for rest:
Going they pass'd a village; but alas!
Returning saw no village to repass;
The 'Squire remember'd too a noble hall,
Large as a church, and whiter than its wall:

This he had noticed as they rode along,
And justly reason'd that their road was wrong
George, full of awe, was modest in reply—
"The fault was his, 't was folly to deny;
And of his master's safety were he sure,
There was no grievance he would not endure."
This made his peace with the relenting 'Squire,
Whose thoughts yet dwelt on supper and a fire,
When as they reach'd a long and pleasant green,
Dwellings of men, and next a man, were seen.
"My friend," said George, "to travellers astray
Point out an inn, and guide us on the way."
The man look'd up; "Surprising! can it be
My master's son? as I'm alive, 't is he."
"How! Robin," George replied, "and are we near
My father's house? how strangely things appear!—
Dear sir, though wanderers, we at last are right·
Let us proceed, and glad my father's sight:
We shall at least be fairly lodged and fed,
I can ensure a supper and a bed;
Let us this night, as one of pleasure date,
And of surprise: it is an act of Fate."
"Go on," the 'Squire in happy temper cried;
"I like such blunder! I approve such guide."
They ride, they halt, the Farmer comes in haste,
Then tells his wife how much their house is graced,
They bless the chance, they praise the lucky son,
That caused the error—nay! it was not one;
But their good fortune—cheerful grew the 'Squire,
Who found dependents, flattery, wine, and fire;
He heard the jack turn round: the busy dame
Produced her damask; and with supper came
The Daughter, dress'd with care, and full of maiden-shame
Surprised, our hero saw the air and dress,
And strove his admiration to express;
Nay! felt it too—for *Harriot* was, in truth,
A tall fair beauty in the bloom of youth;
And from the pleasure and surprise, a grace
Adorn'd the blooming damsel's form and face;
Then, too, such high respect and duty paid
By all—such silent reverence in the maid;
Vent'ring with caution, yet with haste, a glance;
Loth to retire, yet trembling to advance,
Appear'd the nymph, and in her gentle guest
Stirr'd soft emotions till the hour of rest:
Sweet was his sleep, and in the morn again
He felt a mixture of delight and pain:

"How fair, how gentle," said the 'Squire, "how meek,
And yet how sprightly, when disposed to speak!
Nature has bless'd her form, and Heaven her mind.
But in her favours Fortune is unkind;
Poor is the maid—nay, poor she cannot prove
Who is enrich'd with beauty, worth, and love."
The 'Squire arose, with no precise intent
To go or stay—uncertain what he meant:
He moved to part—they begg'd him first to dine;
And who could then escape from Love and Wine?
As came the night, more charming grew the Fair
And seem'd to watch him with a two-fold care:
On the third morn, resolving not to stay,
Though urged by Love, he bravely rode away.
Arrived at home, three pensive days he gave
To feelings fond and meditations grave;
Lovely she was, and if he did not err,
As fond of him as his fond heart of her;
Still he delay'd, unable to decide,
Which was the master-passion, Love or pride:
He sometimes wonder'd how his friend could make,
And then exulted in, the night's mistake;
Had she but fortune, "doubtless then," he cried,
"Some happier man had won the wealthy bride."
While thus he hung in balance, now inclined
To change his state, and then to change his mind,—
That careless George dropp'd idly on the ground
A letter, which his crafty master found;
The stupid youth confess'd his fault, and pray'd
The gen'rous 'Squire to spare a gentle maid;
Of whom her tender mother, full of fears,
Had written much—"She caught her oft in tears,
For ever thinking on a youth above
Her humble fortune—still she own'd not love;
Nor can define, dear girl! the cherish'd pain,
But would rejoice to see the cause again:
That neighbouring youth, whom she endured before,
She now rejects, and will behold no more;
Raised by her passion, she no longer stoops
To her own equals, but she pines and droops,
Like to a lily, on whose sweets the sun
Has withering gazed—she saw and was undone;
His wealth allured her not—nor was she moved
By his superior state, himself she loved;
So mild, so good, so gracious, so genteel,—
But spare your sister, and her love conceal;
We must the fault forgive, since she the pain must feel

"Fault!" said the Squire, "there's coarseness in the mind
That thus conceives of feelings so refined;
Here end my doubts, nor blame yourself, my friend,
Fate made you careless—here my doubts have end."
The way is plain before us—there is now
The Lover's visit first, and then the vow.
Mutual and fond, the marriage-rite, the Bride
Brought to her home with all a husband's pride:
The 'Squire receives the prize his merits won,
And the glad parents leave the patron-son.
But in short time he saw, with much surprise,
First gloom, then grief, and then resentment rise,
From proud, commanding frowns, and anger-darting eyes
"Is there in Harriot's humble mind this fire,
This fierce impatience?" ask'd the puzzled 'Squire;
"Has marriage changed her? or the mask she wore
Has she thrown by, and is herself once more?"
Hour after hour, when clouds on clouds appear,
Dark and more dark, we know the tempest near;
And thus the frowning brow, the restless form,
And threat'ning glance, forerun domestic storm:
So read the Husband, and, with troubled mind,
Reveal'd his fears—"My Love, I hope you find
All here is pleasant—but I must confess
You seem offended, or in some distress;
Explain the grief you feel, and leave me to redress."
"Leave it to you?" replied the Nymph—"indeed!
What! to the cause from whence the ills proceed?
Good Heaven! to take me from a place, where I
Had every comfort underneath the sky,
And then immure me in a gloomy place,
With the grim monsters of your ugly race,
That from their canvass staring, make me dread
Through the dark chambers, where they hang, to tread
No friend nor neighbour comes to give that joy
Which all things here must banish or destroy:
Where is the promised coach? the pleasant ride?
Oh! what a fortune has a Farmer's bride!
Your sordid pride has placed me just above
Your hired domestics—and what pays me? Love!
A selfish fondness I endure each hour,
And share unwitness'd pomp, unenvied power:
I hear your folly, smile at your parade,
And see your favourite dishes duly made;
Then am I richly dress'd for you t' admire,
Such is my duty and my Lord's desire;
Is this a life for youth, for health, for joy?
Are these my duties—this my base employ?

No! to my father's house will I repair,
And make your idle wealth support me there;
Was it your wish to have an humble bride
For bondage thankful? Curse upon your pride!
Was it a slave you wanted? You shall see,
That, if not happy, I at least am free:
Well, sir! your answer:"—silent stood the 'Squire,
As looks a miser at his house on fire;
Where all he deems is vanish'd in that flame,
Swept from the earth his substance and his name;
So, lost to every promised joy of life,
Our 'Squire stood gaping at his angry wife;—
His fate, his ruin, where he saw it vain,
To hope for peace, pray, threaten, or complain;
And thus, betwixt his wonder at the ill
And his despair—there stood he gaping still.
"Your answer, sir!—shall I depart a spot
I thus detest?"—"Oh, miserable lot!"
Exclaim'd the man. "Go, serpent! nor remain
To sharpen woe by insult and disdain:
A nest of harpies was I doom'd to meet;
What plots, what combinations of deceit!
I see it now—all plann'd, design'd, contrived;
Served by that villain—by this fury wived—
What fate is mine! What wisdom, virtue, truth,
Can stand, if demons set their traps for youth?
He lose his way! vile dog! he cannot lose
The way a villain through his life pursues;
And thou, deceiver! thou afraid to move,
And hiding close the serpent in the dove!
I saw—but, fated to endure disgrace,—
Unheeding saw, the fury in thy face:
And call'd it spirit—Oh! I might have found
Fraud and imposture—all the kindred round!
A nest of vipers"————
————"Sir, I'll not admit
These wild effusions of your angry wit:
Have you that value, that we all should use
Such mighty arts for such important views?
Are you such prize—and is my state so fair,
That they should sell their souls to get me there?
Think you that we alone our thoughts disguise?
When in pursuit of some contended prize,
Mask we alone the heart, and soothe whom we despise!
Speak you of craft and subtle schemes, who know
That all your wealth you to deception owe,
Who play'd for ten dull years a scoundrel-part,
To worm yourself into a Widow's heart?

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Now, when you guarded, with superior skill,
That lady's closet, and preserved her Will,
Blind in your craft, you saw not one of those
Opposed by you might you in turn oppose;
Or watch your motions, and by art obtain
Share of that wealth you gave your peace to gain?
Did conscience never———."

——————— "Cease, tormentor, cease—
Or reach me poison———let me rest in peace!"

"Agreed—but hear me—let the truth appear!"
"Then state your purpose—I'll be calm and hear."—
"Know then, this wealth, sole object of your care,
I had some right, without your hand, to share;
My mother's claim was just—but soon she saw
Your power, compell'd insulted, to withdraw:
'Twas then my father, in his anger swore
You should divide the fortune, or restore:
Long we debated—and you find me now
Heroic victim to a father's vow;
Like Jeptha's daughter, but in different state,
And both decreed to mourn our early fate;
Hence was my brother servant to your pride,
Vengeance made him your slave—and me your bride:
Now all is known—a dreadful price I pay
For our revenge—but still we have our day;
All that you love you must with others share,
Or all you dread from their resentment dare:
Yet terms I offer—let contention cease;
Divide the spoil, and let us part in peace."

Our Hero trembling heard—he sat—he rose—
Nor could his motions nor his mind compose;
He paced the room—and, stalking to her side,
Gazed on the face of his undaunted bride;
And nothing there but scorn and calm aversion spied.
He would have vengeance, yet he fear'd the law:
Her friends would threaten, and their power he saw;
"Then let her go:"—but, oh! a mighty sum
Would that demand, since he had let her come;
Nor from his sorrows could he find redress,
Save that which led him to a like distress,
And all his ease was his wife to see
A wretch as anxious and distress'd as he.
Her strongest wish, the fortune to divide,
And part in peace, his avarice denied;
And thus it happen'd, as in all deceit,
The cheater found the evil of the cheat;
The Husband grieved—nor was the Wife at rest;
Him she could vex, and he could her molest;

She could his passion into frenzy raise,
But when the fire was kindled, fear'd the blaze:
As much they studied, so in time they found
The easiest way to give the deepest wound;
But then, like fencers, they were equal still,
Both lost in danger what they gain'd in skill;
Each heart a keener kind of rancour gain'd,
And paining more, was more severely pain'd;
And thus by both were equal vengeance dealt,
And both the anguish they inflicted felt.

TALE XIII.

JESSE AND COLIN.

Then she plots, then she ruminates, then she devises, and what they think in their hearts they may effect, they will break their hearts but they will effect.—*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

She hath spoken that she should not, I am sure of that; Heaven knows what she hath known.—*Macbeth.*

A Vicar died and left his Daughter poor—
It hurt her not, she was not rich before:
Her humble share of worldly goods she sold,
Paid every debt, and then her fortune told;
And found, with youth and beauty, hope and health,
Two hundred guineas was her worldly wealth,
It then remain'd to choose her path in life,
And first, said *Jesse*, "Shall I be a wife?—
Colin is mild and civil, kind and just,
I know his love, his temper I can trust;
But small his farm, it asks perpetual care,
And we must toil as well as trouble share:
True, he was taught in all the gentle arts
That raise the soul, and soften human hearts;
And boasts a parent, who deserves to shine
In higher class, and I could wish her mine;
Nor wants he will his station to improve,
A just ambition waked by faithful love:—
Still is he poor—and here my Father's Friend
Deigns for his daughter, as her own, to send.
A worthy lady, who it seems has known
A world of griefs and troubles of her own:
I was an infant, when she came, a guest
Beneath my father's humble roof to rest;
Her kindred all unfeeling, vast her woes,
Such her complaint, and there she found repose
Enrich'd by fortune, now she nobly lives,
And nobly, from the blest abundance, gives;
The grief, the want, of human life, she knows,
And comfort there, and here relief bestows:

But, are they not dependants?—Foolish pride!
Am I not honour'd by such friend and guide?
Have I a home?" (here Jesse dropp'd a tear,)
"Or friend beside?"—A faithful friend was near.
Now Colin came, at length resolved to lay
His heart before her, and to urge her stay.
True, his own plough the gentle Colin drove,
An humble farmer with aspiring love,
Who, urged by passion, never dared till now,
Thus urged by fears, his trembling hopes avow:
Her father's glebe he managed; every year
The grateful Vicar held the youth more dear;
He saw indeed the prize in Colin's view,
And wish'd his Jesse with a man so true;
Timid as true, he urg'd with anxious air
His tender hope, and made the trembling prayer;
When Jesse saw, nor could with coldness see,
Such fond respect, such tried sincerity;
Grateful for favours to her father dealt,
She more than grateful for his passion felt;
Nor could she frown on one so good and kind,
Yet fear'd to smile, and was unfix'd in mind;
But prudence placed the Female friend in view—
What might not one so rich and grateful do?
So lately, too, the good old Vicar died,
His faithful daughter must not cast aside
The signs of filial grief, and be a ready bride:
Thus, led by prudence, to the Lady's seat,
The Village-Beauty purposed to retreat:
But, as in hard-fought fields the victor knows
What to the vanquish'd he, in honour, owes
So, in this conquest over powerful love,
Prudence resolved a generous foe to prove;
And Jesse felt a mingled fear and pain
In her dismission of a faithful swain,
Gave her kind thanks, and when she saw his woe,
Kindly betray'd that she was loth to go;
"But would she promise, if abroad she met
A frowning world, she would remember yet
Where dwelt a friend?"—"That could she not forget!"
And thus they parted; but each faithful heart
Felt the compulsion, and refused to part.
Now, by the morning mail the timid Maid
Was to that kind and wealthy Dame convey'd;
Whose invitation, when her father died,
Jesse as comfort to her heart applied;
She knew the days her generous Friend had seen—
As wife and widow, evil days had been;

She married early, and for half her life
Was an insulted and forsaken wife;
Widow'd and poor, her angry father gave,
Mix'd with reproach, the pittance of a slave;
Forgetful brothers pass'd her, but she knew
Her humbler friends, and to their home withdrew:
The good old Vicar to her sire applied
For help, and help'd her when her sire denied;
When in few years Death stalk'd through bower and hall,
Sires, sons, and sons of sons, were buried all:
She then abounded, and had wealth to spare
For softening grief she once was doom'd to share:
Thus train'd in misery's school, and taught to feel,
She would rejoice an orphan's woe to heal:—
So Jesse thought, who look'd within her breast,
And thence conceived how bounteous minds are bless'd.

From her vast mansion look'd the Lady down
On humbler buildings of a busy town;
Thence came her friends of either sex, and all
With whom she lived on terms reciprocal:
They pass'd the hours with their accustom'd ease,
As guests inclined, but not compell'd, to please:
But there were others in the mansion found,
For office chosen, and by duties bound;
Three female rivals each of power possess'd,
Th' attendant Maid, poor Friend, and kindred-Guest.

To these came Jesse, as a seaman thrown
By the rude storm upon a coast unknown:
The view was flattering, civil seem'd the race,
But all unknown the dangers of the place.

Few hours had pass'd, when, from attendants freed,
The Lady utter'd—"This is kind indeed;
Believe me, love! that I for one like you
Have daily pray'd, a friend discreet and true.
Oh! wonder not that I on you depend,
You are mine own hereditary friend:
Hearken, my Jesse, never can I trust
Beings ungrateful, selfish, and unjust;
But you are present, and my load of care
Your love will serve to lighten and to share.
Come near me, Jesse—let not those below
Of my reliance on your friendship know;
Look as they look, be in their freedoms free—
But all they say, do you convey to me."

Here Jesse's thoughts to Colin's cottage flew,
And with such speed she scarce their absence knew
"Jane loves her mistress, and should she depart,
lose her service and she breaks her heart;

My ways and wishes, looks and thoughts, she knows,
And duteous care by close attention shows:
But is she faithful? in temptation strong?
Will she not wrong me? ah! I fear the wrong:
Your father loved me; now, in time of need,
Watch for my good, and to his place succeed.
"Blood doesn't bind—that Girl, who every day
Eats of my bread, would wish my life away;
I am her *dear relation*, and she thinks
To make her fortune an ambitious minx!
She only courts me for the prospect's sake,
Because she knows I have a Will to make;
Yes, love! my Will delay'd, I know not how—
But you are here, and I will make it now.
"That idle Creature, keep her in your view
See what she does, what she desires to do;
On her young mind may artful villains prey,
And to my plate and jewels find a way:
A pleasant humour has the girl; her smile,
And cheerful manner, tedious hours beguile:
But well observe her, ever near her be,
Close in your thoughts, in your professions free.
"Again, my Jesse, hear what I advise,
And watch a woman ever in disguise;
Issop, that widow, serious, subtle, sly—
But what of this?—I must have company:
She markets for me, and although she makes
Profit, no doubt, of all she undertakes,
Yet she is one I can to all produce,
And all her talents are in daily use:
Deprived of her, I may another find
As sly and selfish, with a weaker mind:
But never trust her, she is full of art,
And worms herself into the closest heart;
Seem then, I pray you, careless in her sight,
Nor let her know, my love, how we unite.
"Do, my good Jesse, cast a view around,
And let no wrong within my house be found;
That Girl associates with——I know not who
Are her companions, nor what ill they do:
'Tis then the Widow plans, 'tis then she tries
Her various arts and schemes for fresh supplies:
'Tis then, if ever, *Jane* her duty quits,
And, whom I know not, favours and admits:
Oh! watch their movements all; for me 'tis hard,
Indeed is vain, but you may keep a guard;
And I, when none your watchful glance deceive,
May make my Will, and think what I shall leave."

Jesse, with fear, disgust, alarm, surprise,
Heard of these duties for her ears and eyes;
Heard by what service she must gain her bread
And went with scorn and sorrow to her bed.

Jane was a servant fitted for her place,
Experienced, cunning, fraudful, selfish, base:
Skill'd in those mean humiliating arts
That make their way to proud and selfish hearts
By instinct taught, she felt an awe, a fear,
For Jesse's upright, simple character;
Whom with gross flattery she awhile assail'd,
And then beheld with hatred when it fail'd;
Yet trying still upon her mind for hold,
She all the secrets of the mansion told;
And, to invite an equal trust, she drew
Of every mind a bold and rapid view;
But on the widow'd Friend with deep disdain,
And rancorous envy, dwelt the treacherous Jane—
In vain such arts; without deceit or pride,
With a just taste and feeling for her guide,
From all contagion Jesse kept apart,
Free in her manners, guarded in her heart.

Jesse one morn was thoughtful, and her sigh
The Widow heard as she was passing by;
And—"Well!" she said, "is that some distant swain
Or aught with us, that gives your bosom pain?
Come, we are fellow-sufferers, slaves in thrall,
And tasks and griefs are common to us all;
Think not my frankness strange: they love to paint
Their state with freedom, who endure restraint;
And there is something in that speaking eye
And sober mien, that prove I may rely:
You came a stranger; to my words attend,
Accept my offer, and you find a friend;
It is a labyrinth in which you stray,
Come, hold my clue, and I will lead the way.
Good Heav'n! that one so jealous, envious, base,
Should be the mistress of so sweet a place;
She, who so long herself was low and poor,
Now broods suspicious on her useless store;
She loves to see us abject, loves to deal
Her insult round, and then pretends to feel:
Prepare to cast all dignity aside,
For know your talents will be quickly tried;
Nor think, from favours past, a friend to gain,
'Tis but by duties we our posts maintain:
I read her novels, gossip through the town,
And daily go, for idle stories, down;

I cheapen all she buys, and bear the curse
Of honest tradesmen for my niggard-purse;
And, when for her this meanness I display,
She cries, 'I heed not what I throw away,'
Of secret bargains I endure the shame,
And stake my credit for our fish and game;
Oft has she smiled to hear 'her generous soul
Would gladly give, but stoops to my control:'
Nay! I have heard her, when she chanced to come
Where I contended for a petty sum,
Affirm 'twas painful to behold such care,
'But Issop's nature is to pinch and spare.'
Thus all the meanness of the house is mine,
And my reward—to scorn her, and to dine.

"See next that giddy thing, with neither pride
To keep her safe, nor principle to guide:
Poor, idle, simple flirt! as sure as fate
Her maiden-fame will have an early date:
Of her beware; for all who live below
Have faults they wish not all the world to know;
And she is fond of listening, full of doubt,
And stoops to guilt to find an error out.

"And now once more observe the artful Maid,
A lying, prying, jilting, thievish jade;
I think, my love, you would not condescend
To call a low, illiterate girl your friend:
But in our troubles we are apt, you know,
To lean on all who some compassion show:
And she has flexile features, acting eyes,
And seems with every look to sympathise;
No mirror can a mortal's grief express
With more precision, or can feel it less;
That proud, mean spirit, she by fawning courts
By vulgar flattery, and by vile reports;
And, by that proof she every instant gives
To one so mean, that yet a meaner lives.—

"Come, I have drawn the curtain, and you see
Your fellow-actors, all our company;
Should you incline to throw reserve aside,
And in my judgment and my love confide,
I could some prospects open to your view,
That ask attention—and, till then, adieu."

"Farewell!" said Jesse, hastening to her room,
Where all she saw within, without, was gloom:
Confused, perplexed, she pass'd a dreary hour
Before her reason could exert its power;
To her all seem'd mysterious, all allied
To avarice, meanness, folly, craft, and pride

Wearied with thought, she breathed the garden's air,
Then came the laughing Lass, and join'd her there.
"My sweetest friend has dwelt with us a week,
And does she love us? be sincere and speak;
My Aunt you cannot—Lord! how I should hate
To be like her, all misery and state;
Proud, and yet envious, she disgusted sees
All who are happy, and who look at ease.
Let friendship bind us, I will quickly show
Some favourites near us, you'll be blest to know,
My aunt forbids it—but, can she expect,
To soothe her spleen, we shall ourselves neglect?
Jane and the Widow were to watch and stay
My free-born feet; I watch'd as well as they;
Lo! what is this? this simple key explores
The dark recess that holds the Spinster's stores;
And, led by her ill star, I chanced to see
Where Issop keeps her stock of ratafie;
Used in the hours of anger and alarm,
It makes her civil, and it keeps her warm:
Thus bless'd with secrets, both would choose to hide,
Their fears now grant me what their scorn denied.
"My freedom thus, by their assent secured,
Bad as it is, the place may be endured;
And bad it is, but her estates, you know,
And her beloved hoards, she must bestow;
So we can slyly our amusements take,
And friends of demons, if they help us, make."
"Strange creatures these,' thought Jesse, half inclined
To smile at one malicious and yet kind;
Frank and yet cunning, with a heart to love
And malice prompt—the serpent and the dove;
Here could she dwell? or could she yet depart?
Could she be artful? could she bear with art?—
This splendid mansion gave the cottage grace,
She thought a dungeon was a happier place;
And Colin pleading, when he pleaded best,
Wrought not such sudden change in Jesse's breast.
The wondering maiden who had only read
Of such vile beings, saw them now with dread;
Safe in themselves—for nature has design'd
The creature's poison harmless to the kind;
But all beside who in the haunts are found
Must dread the poison, and must feel the wound.
Days full of care, slow weary weeks pass'd on,
Eager to go, still Jesse was not gone:
Her time in trifling, or in tears, she spent,
She never gave, she never felt, content:

The Lady wonder'd that her humble guest
Strove not to please, would neither lie nor jest;
She sought no news, no scan'dal would convey,
But walk'd for health, and w s at church to pray
All this displeased, and soon he Widow cried:
"Let me be frank—I am not satisfied;
You know my wishes, I your judgment trust;
You can be useful, Jesse, and you must;
Let me be plainer, child—I want an ear.
When I am deaf, instead of mine to hear;
When mine is sleeping, let your eye awake;
When I observe not, observation take;
Alas! I rest not on my pillow laid,
Then threat'ning whispers make my soul afraid:
The tread of strangers to my ear ascends,
Fed at my cost, the minions o' my friends;
While you, without a care, a wish to please,
Eat the vile bread of idleness and ease."

Th' indignant Girl astonish'd answer'd—"Nay!
This instant, madam, let me haste away;
Thus speaks my father's, thus an orphan's friend?
This instant, lady, let your bounty end."

The Lady frown'd indignant—"What!" she cries,
"A vicar's daughter with a princess' pride!
And pauper's lot! but pitying I forgive;
How, simple Jesse, do you think to live?
Have I not power to help you, foolish maid?
To my concerns be your attention paid;
With cheerful mind th' allotted duties take,
And recollect I have a Will to make."

Jesse, who felt as liberal natures feel,
When thus the baser their designs reveal,
Replied—"Those duties were to her unfit,
Nor would her spirit to her tasks submit."

In silent scorn the Lady sate awhile,
And then replied with stern contemptuous smile—
"Think you, fair madam, that you came to share
Fortunes like mine without a thought or care?
A guest, indeed! from every trouble free,
Dress'd by my help, with not a care for me;
When I a visit to your father made,
I for the poor assistance largely paid;
To his domestics I their tasks assign'd,
I fix'd the portion for his hungry hind;
And had your father (simple man!) obey'd
My good advice, and watch'd as well as pray'd,
He might have left you something with his prayers,
And lent some colour for these lofty airs.—

"In tears! my love! Oh, then my soften'd heart
Cannot resist—we never more will part;
I need your friendship—I will be your friend
And thus determined, to my Will attend."
Jesse went forth, but with determined soul
To fly such love, to break from such control:
'I hear enough," the trembling damsel cried;
'Flight be my care, and Providence my guide:
Ere yet a prisoner, I escape will make;
Will, thus display'd, the insidious arts forsake,
And, as the rattle sounds, will fly the fatal snake."
Jesse her thanks upon the morrow paid,
Prepared to go, determined though afraid.
"Ungrateful creature," said the Lady, "this
Could I imagine?—are you frantic, miss?
What! leave your friend, your prospects—is it true!"
This Jesse answer'd by a mild "Adieu!"
The Dame replied, "Then houseless may you rove
The starving victim to a guilty love;
Branded with shame, in sickness doom'd to nurse
An ill-form'd cub, your scandal and your curse:
Spurn'd by its scoundrel father, and ill-fed
By surly rustics with the parish-bread!—
Relent you not?—speak—yet I can forgive;
Still live with me"—"With you," said Jesse, "live?
No! I would first endure what you describe,
Rather than breathe with your detested tribe!
Who long have feign'd, till now their very hearts
Are firmly fixed in their accursed parts;
Who all profess esteem, and feel disdain,
And all, with justice, of deceit complain;
Whom I could pity, but that, while I stay,
My terror drives all kinder thoughts away;
Grateful for this, that, when I think of you,
I little fear what poverty can do."
The angry matron her attendant Jane
Summon'd in haste to soothe the fierce disdain:
"A vile detested wretch!" the Lady cried,
"Yet shall she be, by many an effort, tried,
And, clogg'd with debt and fear, against her will abide;
And, once secured, she never shall depart
Till I have proved the firmness of her heart:
Then when she dares not, would not, cannot go,
I'll make her feel what 'tis to use me so."
The pensive Colin in his garden stray'd,
But felt not then the beauties it display'd;
There many a pleasant object met his view,
A rising wood of oaks behind it grew;

A stream ran by it, and the village-green
And public road were from the garden seen;
Save where the pine and larch the bound ry made,
And on the rose-beds threw a softening shade.
The mother sat beside the garden door,
Dress'd as in times ere she an t hers were poor;
The broad-laced cap was known in ancient days,
When madam s dress compell d the villa_e praise;
And still she look'd as in the times of old,
Ere his last farm the erring husband sold;
While yet the mansion stood in decent state,
And paupers waited at the well-known gate.
"Alas, my son!" the Mother cried, "and why
That silent grief and oft-repeated sigh?
True we are poor, but thou hast never felt
Pangs to thy father for his error dealt;
Pangs from strong hopes of visionary gain,
For ever raised, and ever found in vain.
He rose unhappy from his fruitless schemes,
As guilty wretches from their blissful dreams;
But thou wert then, my son, a playful child,
Wondering at grief, gay, innocent, and wild;
Listening at times to thy poor mother s sighs,
With curious looks and innocent surprise;
Thy father dying, thou, my virtuous boy,
My comfort always, waked my soul to joy;
With the poor remnant of our fortune left,
Thou hast our station of its gloom bereft:
Thy lively temper, and thy cheerful air,
Have cast a smile on sadness and despair;
Thy active hand has dealt to this poor space
The bliss of plenty and the charm of grace;
And all around us wonder when they find
Such taste and strength, such skill and power combined
There is no mother, Colin, no not one,
But envies me so kind, so good a son;
By thee supported on this failing side,
Weakness itself awakes a parent's pride:
I bless the stroke that was my grief before,
And feel such joy that tis disease no more;
Shielded by thee, my want becomes my wealth—
And soothed by Colin, sickness smiles at health;
The old men love thee, they repeat thy praise,
And say, like thee were youth in earlier days;
While every village-maiden cries, 'How gay,
How smart, how brave, how good is Colin Grey!'
"Yet art thou sad; alas! my son, I know
Thy heart is wounded, and the cure is slow;

Fain would I think that Jesse still may come
To share the comforts of our rustic home·
She surely loved thee; I have seen the maid,
When thou hast kindly brought the Vicar aid—
When thou hast eased his bosom of its pain,
Oh! I have seen her—she will come again."
The Matron ceased; and Colin stood the while
Silent, but striving for a grateful smile;
He then replied—"Ah! sure, had Jesse stay'd,
And shared the comforts of our sylvan shade,
The tenderest duty and the fondest love
Would not have fail'd that generous heart to move;
A grateful pity would have ruled her breast,
And my distresses would have made me blest.
"But she is gone, and ever has in view
Grandeur and taste,—and what will then ensue?
Surprise and then delight in scenes so fair and new;
For many a day, perhaps for many a week,
Home will have charms, and to her bosom speak;
But thoughtless ease, and affluence, and pride,
Seen day by day, will draw the heart aside:
And she at length, though gentle and sincere,
Will think no more of our enjoyments here."
Sighing he spake—but hark! he hears the approach
Of rattling wheels! and, lo! the evening-coach;
Once more the movement of the horses' feet
Makes the fond heart with strong emotion beat:
Faint were his hopes, but ever had the sight
Drawn him to gaze beside his gate at night;
And when with rapid wheels it hurried by,
He grieved his parent with a hopeless sigh:
And could the blessing have been bought—what sum
Had he not offer'd, to have Jesse come!
She came—he saw her bending from the door,
Her face, her smile, and he beheld no more;
Lost in his joy—the mother lent her aid
T' assist and to detain the willing Maid;
Who thought her late, her present home to make,
Sure of a welcome for the Vicar's sake.
But the good parent was so pleased, so kind,
So pressing Colin, she so much inclined,
That night advanced; and then so long detain'd,
No wishes to depart she felt, or feign'd;
Yet long in doubt she stood, and then perforce remain'd
Here was a lover fond, a friend sincere;
Here was content and joy, for she was here:
In the mild evening, in the scene around,
The Maid, now free, peculiar beauties found;

Blended with village-tones, the evening gale
Gave the sweet night-bird's warblings to the vale:
The youth emboldened, yet abash'd, now told
His fondest wish, nor found the maiden cold;
The Mother smiling whisper'd—"Let him go
And seek the license!" Jesse answer'd, "No:"
But Colin went.—I know not if they live
With all the comforts wealth and plenty give;
But with pure joy to envious souls denied,
To suppliant meanness and suspicious pride;
And village-maids of happy couples say,
'They live like Jesse Bourn and Colin Grey.'

TALE XIV.

THE STRUGGLES OF CONSCIENCE.

I am a Villain; yet I lie, I am not;
Fool! of thyself speak well:—Fool! do not flatter.
My Conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale.—*Richard III.*

My Conscience is but a kind of hard Conscience. . . . The fiend gives the more friendly counsel.—*Merchant of Venice.*

A SERIOUS Toyman in the city dwelt,
Who much concern for his religion felt;
Reading, he changed his tenets, read again,
And various questions could with skill maintain;
Papist and Quaker if we set aside,
He had the road of every traveller tried;
There walk'd awhile, and on a sudden turn'd
Into some by-way he had just discern'd:
He had a nephew, *Fulham*:—Fulham went
His Uncle's way, with every turn content;
He saw his pious kinsman's watchful care,
And thought such anxious pains his own might spare.
And he the truth obtain'd, without the toil, might share.
In fact, young Fulham, though he little read,
Perceived his uncle was by fancy led;
And smiled to see the constant care he took,
Collating creed with creed, and book with book.
At length the senior fix'd; I pass the sect
He call'd a Church, 'twas precious and elect;
Yet the seed fell not in the richest soil,
For few disciples paid the preacher's toil;
All in an attic-room were wont to meet
These few disciples at their pastor's feet;
With these went Fulham, who, discreet and grave,
Follow'd the light his worthy uncle gave;
Till a warm Preacher found a way t' impart
Awakening feelings to his torpid heart:

Some weighty truths, and of unpleasant kind,
Sank, though resisted, in his struggling mind:
He wish'd to fly them, but compelled to stay,
Truth to the waking Conscience found her way;—
For though the Youth was call'd a prudent lad,
And prudent was, yet serious faults he had—
Who now reflected—"Much am I surprised;
I find these notions cannot be despised;
No! there is something I perceive at last,
Although my uncle cannot hold it fast;
Though I the strictness of these men reject,
Yet I determine to be circumspect:
This man alarms me, and I must begin
To look more closely to the things within:
These sons of zeal have I derided long,
But now begin to think the laughers wrong;
Nay! my good uncle, by all teachers moved,
Will be preferr'd to him who none approved;
Better to love amiss than nothing to have loved."

Such were his thoughts, when Conscience first began
To hold converse with th' awaken'd man:
He from that time reserved and cautious grew,
And for his duties felt obedience due;
Pious he was not, but he fear'd the pain
Of sins committed, nor would sin again.
Whene'er he stray'd, he found his Conscience rose,
Like one determined what was ill t' oppose,
What wrong t' accuse, what secret to disclose:
To drag forth every latent act to light,
And fix them fully in the actor's sight:
This gave him trouble, but he still confess'd
The labour useful, for it brought him rest.

The Uncle died, and when the Nephew read
The will, and saw the substance of the dead—
Five hundred guineas, with a stock in trade—
He much rejoiced, and thought his fortune made;
Yet felt aspiring pleasure at the sight,
And for increase, increasing appetite:
Desire of profit idle habits check'd,
(For Fulham's virtue was to be correct:)
He and his Conscience had their compact made—
"Urge me with truth, and you will soon persuade;
But not," he cried, "for mere ideal things
Give me to feel those terror-breeding stings."

"Let not such thoughts," she said, "your mind
confound;
Trifles may wake me, but they never wound;

In them indeed there is a wrong and right,
But you will find me pliant and polite;
Not like a Conscience of the dotard kind,
Awake to dreams, to dire offences blind:
Let all within be pure, in all beside
Be your own master, governor, and guide;
Alive to danger, in temptation strong,
And I shall sleep our whole existence long."
"Sweet be thy sleep," said Fulham; "strong must be
The tempting ill that gains access to me:
Never will I to evil deed consent,
Or, if surprised, oh! how will I repent!
Should gain be doubtful, soon would I restore
The dangerous good, or give it to the poor;
Repose for them my growing wealth shall buy—
Or build—who knows? an hospital like Guy?—
Yet why such means to soothe the smart within,
While firmly purposed to renounce the sin?"
Thus our young Trader and his Conscience dwelt
In mutual love, and great the joy they felt;
But yet in small concerns, in trivial things,
"She was," he said, "too ready with the stings;'
And he too apt, in search of growing gains,
To lose the fear of penalties and pains:
Yet these were trifling bickerings, petty jars,
Domestic strifes, preliminary wars;
He ventured little, little she express'd
Of indignation, and they both had rest.
Thus was he fix'd to walk the worthy way
When profit urged him to a bold essay:—
A time was that when all at pleasure gamed
In lottery chances, yet a law unblamed;
This Fulham tried; who would to him advance
A pound or crown, he gave in turn a chance
For weighty prize—and should they nothing share,
They had their crown or pound in Fulham's ware;
Thus the old stores within the shop were sold
For that which none refuses, new or old.
Was this unjust? yet Conscience could not rest,
But made a mighty struggle in the breast;
And gave th' aspiring man an early proof,
That should they war he would have work enough
'Suppose," said she, "your vended numbers rise
The same with those which gain each real prize,
(Such your proposal,) can you ruin shun?"
A hundred thousand," he replied, "to one."
Still it may happen:" "I the sum must pay"
"You know you cannot:" "I can run away."

"That is dishonest:"—"Nay, but you must wink
At a chance-hit: it cannot be, I think:
Upon my conduct as a whole decide,
Such trifling errors let my virtues hide;
Fail I at meeting? am I sleepy there?
My purse refuse I with the priest to share?
Do I deny the poor a helping hand?
Or stop the wicked women in the Strand?
Or drink at club beyond a certain pitch?
Which are your charges? Conscience, tell me which?
"'T is well," said she, "but —" "Nay, I pray, have done:
Trust me, I will not into danger run."
The lottery drawn, not one demand was made;
Fulham gain'd profit and increase of trade.
'See now,' said he—for Conscience yet arose—
'How foolish 't is such measures to oppose:
Have I not blameless thus my state advanced?"
"Still," mutter'd Conscience, "still it might have chanced."
"Might!" said our hero, "who is so exact
As to inquire what might have been a fact?"
Now Fulham's shop contain'd a curious view
Of costly trifles elegant and new:
The papers told where kind mammas might buy
The gayest toys to charm an infant's eye;
Where generous beaux might gentle damsels please,
And travellers call who cross the land or seas,
And find the curious art, the neat device,
Of precious value and of trifling price.
Here conscience rested, she was pleased to find
No less an active than an honest mind;
But when he named his price, and when he swore,
His Conscience check'd him, that he ask'd no more,
When half he sought had been a large increase
On fair demand, she could not rest in peace:
(Beside th' affront to call th' adviser in,
Who would prevent, to justify the sin?)
She therefore told him, that "he vainly tried
To soothe her anger, conscious that he lied;
If thus he grasp'd at such usurious gains,
He must deserve, and should expect her pains."
The charge was strong; he would in part confess
Offence there was—But, who offended less?
"What! is a mere assertion call'd a lie?
And if it be, are men compell'd to buy?
'Twas strange that Conscience on such points should dwell,
While he was acting (he would call it) well;
He bought as others buy, he sold as others sell;

There was no fraud, and he demanded cause
Why he was troubled, when he kept the laws?"
"My laws!" said Conscience: "What," said he, "are
thine?
Oral or written, human or divine?
Show me the chapter, let me see the text;
By laws uncertain subjects are perplex'd:
Let me my finger on the statute lay,
And I shall feel it duty to obey."
"Reflect," said Conscience, "'t was your own le ir
That I should warn you—does the compact tire?
Repent you this? then bid me not advise,
And rather hear your passions as they rise,
So you may counsel and remonstrance shun,
But then remember it is war begun;
And you may judge from some attacks, my friend,
What serious conflicts will on war attend."
"Nay, but," at length the thoughtful man replied,
"I say not that; I wish you for my guide:
Wish for your checks and your reproofs—but then
Be like a Conscience of my fellow men;
Worthy I mean, and men of good report,
And not the wretches who with conscience sport:
There s Bice, my friend, who passes off his grease
Of pigs for bears', in pots a crown apiece;
His conscience never checks him when he swears
The fat he sells is honest fat of bears;
And so it is, for he contrives to give
A drachm to each—'tis thus that tradesmen live·
Now why should you and I be over nice;
What man is held in more repute than Bice?"
Here ended the dispute: but yet 'twas plain
The parties both expected strife again:
Their friendship cool'd, he look'd about and saw
Numbers who seem'd unshackled by his awe:
While like a school-boy he was threaten'd still,
Now for the deed, now only for the will;
Here Conscience answer'd, "To thy neighbour's guide
Thy neighbour leave, and in thine own confide."
Such were each day the charges and replies,
When a new object caught the trader's eyes;
A Vestry-patriot, could he gain the name,
Would famous make him, and would pay the fame·
He knew full well the sums bequeath'd in charge
For schools, for alms-men, for the poor, were large;
Report had told, and he could feel it true,
That most unfairly dealt the trusted few;
No partners would they in their office take,
Nor clear accounts at annual meetings make,

Aloud our hero in the vestry spoke
Of hidden deeds, and vow'd to draw the cloak;
It was the poor man's cause, and he for one
Was quite determined to see justice done:
His foes affected laughter, then disdain,
They too were loud and threat'ning, but in vain;
The pauper's friend, their foe, arose and spoke again:
Fiercely he cried, "Your garbled statements show
That you determine we shall nothing know;
But we shall bring your hidden crimes to light,
Give you to shame, and to the poor their right."
Virtue like this might some approval ask—
But Conscience sternly said, "You wear a mask!"
"At least," said Fulham, "if I have a view
To serve myself, I serve the public too."
Fulham, though check'd, retain'd his former zeal,
And this the cautious rogues began to feel:
'Thus will he ever bark," in peevish tone,
An elder cried—"the cur must have a bone:"
They then began to hint, and to begin
Was all they needed—it was felt within;
In terms less veil'd an offer then was made,
Though distant still, it fail'd not to persuade:
More plainly then was every point proposed,
Approved, accepted, and the bargain closed.
The exulting paupers hail'd their Friend's success,
And bade adieu to murmurs and distress.
Alas! their Friend had now superior light,
And view'd by that, he found that all was right;
There were no errors, the disbursements small;
This was the truth, and truth was due to all.
And rested Conscience? No! she would not rest,
Yet was content with making a protest:
Some acts she now with less resistance bore,
Nor took alarm so quickly as before:
Like those in towns besieged, who every ball
At first with terror view, and dread them all;
But, grown familiar with the scenes, they fear
The danger less, as it approaches near:
So Conscience, more familiar with the view
Of growing evils, less attentive grew:
Yet he, who felt some pain and dreaded more,
Gave a peace-offering to the angry poor.
Thus had he quiet—but the time was brief,
From his new triumph sprang a cause of grief;
In office join'd, and acting with the rest
He must admit the sacramental test.
Now, as a sectary, he had all his life,
As he supposed, been with the Church at strife;—

No rules of hers, no laws had he perused,
Nor knew the tenets he by rote abused;
Yet Conscience here arose more fierce and strong,
Than when she told of robbery and wrong;
"Change his religion! No! he must be sure
That was a blow no Conscience could endure."
Though friend to Virtue, yet she oft abides
In early notions, fix'd by erring guides:
And is more startled by a call from those,
Than when the foulest crimes her rest oppose;
By error taught, by prejudice misled,
She yields her rights, and Fancy rules instead;
When Conscience all her stings and terrors deals,
Not as Truth dictates, but as Fancy feels:
And thus within our hero's troubled breast,
Crime was less torture than the odious test.
New forms, new measures, he must now embrace,
With sad conviction that they warr'd with grace;
To his new church no former friend would come,
They scarce preferr'd her to the church of Rome:
But thinking much, and weighing guilt and gain,
Conscience and he commuted for her pain;
Then promised Fulham to retain his creed,
And their peculiar paupers still to feed;
Their attic-room (in secret) to attend,
And not forget he was *the preacher's* friend;
Thus he proposed, and Conscience, troubled, tried,
And wanting peace, reluctantly complied.
Now care subdued, and apprehensions gone,
In peace our hero went aspiring on:
But short the period—soon a quarrel rose,
Fierce in the birth, and fatal in the close;
With times of truce between, which rather proved
That both were weary, than that either loved.
Fulham ev n now disliked the heavy thrall,
And for her death would in his anguish call,
As Rome's mistaken friend exclaim'd, *Let Carthage fall!*
So felt our hero, so his wish express'd,
Against this powerful sprite—*delenda est:*
Rome in her conquest saw not danger near,
Freed from her rival, and without a fear;
So, Conscience conquer'd, men perceive how free,
But not how fatal such a state must be.
Fatal not free our hero s: foe or friend,
Conscience on him was destined to attend:
She dozed indeed, grew dull, nor seem d to spy
Crime following crime, and each of deeper dye;
But all were noticed, and the reckoning time
With her account came on—crime following crime

This, once a foe, now Brother in the Trust,
Whom Fulham late described as fair and just
Was the sole Guardian of a wealthy maid,
Placed in his power, and of his frown afraid:
Not quite an idiot, for her busy brain
Sought, by poor cunning, trifling points to gain;
Success in childish projects her delight,
She took no heed of each important right.
The friendly parties met—the Guardian cried
I am too old: my sons have each a bride:
Martha, my ward, would make an easy wife;
On easy terms I'll make her yours for life;
And then the creature is so weak and mild,
She may be soothed and threaten'd as a child:—
"Yet not obey," said Fulham, "for your fools,
Female and male, are obstinate as mules."
Some points adjusted, these new friends agreed,
Proposed the day, and hurried on the deed.
"'Tis a vile act," said Conscience:—'it will pass'
Replied the bolder man, "an act of love;
Her wicked guardian might the girl have sold
To endless misery for a tyrant's gold:
Now may her life be happy—for I mean
To keep my temper even and serene."
"I cannot thus compound," the spirit cried,
"Nor have my laws thus broken and defied:
This is a fraud, a bargain for a wife;
Expect my vengeance, or amend your life."
The wife was pretty, trifling, childish, weak,
She could not think, but would not cease to speak.
This he forbad—she took the caution ill,
And boldly rose against his sovereign will:
With idiot-cunning she would watch the hour,
When friends were present, to dispute his power:
With tyrant-craft, he then was still and calm,
But raised in private terror and alarm:
By many trials she perceived how far
To vex and tease, without an open war;
And he discover'd that so weak a mind
No art could lead, and no compulsion bind;
The rudest force would fail such mind to tame,
And she was callous to rebuke and shame;
Proud of her wealth, the power of law she knew,
And would assist him in the spending too:
His threat'ning words with insult she defied,
To all his reasoning with a stare replied;
And when he begg'd her to attend, would say,
Attend I will—but let me have my way."

Nor rest had Conscience: "While you merit pain
From me," she cried, "you seek redress in vain."
His thoughts were grievous. "All that I possess
From this vile bargain adds to my distress;
To pass a life with one who will not mend,
Who cannot love, nor save, nor wisely spend,
Is a vile prospect, and I see no end;
For if we part, I must of course restore
Much of her money, and must wed no more
"Is there no way?"—here Conscience rose in power
"Oh! fly the danger of this fatal hour;
I am thy Conscience faithful, fond, and true,
Ah, fly this thought or evil must ensue;
Fall on thy knees, and pray with all thy soul,
Thy purpose banish, thy design control;
Let every hope of such advantage cease,
Or never more expect a moment's peace."
Th' affrighten d man a due attention paid,
Felt the rebuke and the command obey d.
Again the wife rebell d, again express'd
A love for pleasure—a contempt of rest;
"She whom she pleased would visit, would receive
Those who pleased her, nor deign to ask for leave."
"One way there is," said he; "I might contrive
Into a trap this foolish thing to drive:
Who pleased her, said she?—I'll be certain who—"
"Take heed," said Conscience, "what thou mean'st to do
"Ensnare thy wife?"—"Why yes," he must confess,
It might be wrong—but there was no redress;
"Beside, to think," said he, "is not to sin."
"Mistaken man!" replied the power within.
No guest unnoticed to the lady came,
He judged th' event with mingled joy and shame,
Oft he withdrew, and seem'd to leave her free,
But still as watchful as a lynx was he;
Meanwhile the wife was thoughtless, cool, and gay,
And, without virtue, had no wish to stray.
Though thus opposed, his plans were not resign'd;
"Revenge," said he, "will prompt that daring mind;
Refused supplies, insulted and distress'd,
Enraged with me, and near a favourite guest—
Then will her vengeance prompt the daring deed,
And I shall watch, detect her, and be freed."
There was a Youth—but let me hide the name,
With all the progress of this deed of shame;—
He had his views—on him the husband cast
His net, and saw him in his trammels fast.
"Pause for a moment—think what you intend,"
Said the roused Sleeper: "I am yet a friend;

Must all our days in enmity be spent?
No!" and he paused—"I surely shall repent:"
Then hurried on—the evil plan was laid,
The wife was guilty, and her friend betray'd,
And Fulham gain'd his wish, and for his will was paid.
Had crimes less weighty on the spirit press'd,
This troubled Conscience might have sunk to rest;
And like a foolish guard been bribed to peace,
By a false promise, that offence should cease;
Past faults that seem'd familiar to the view,
Confused if many, and obscure though true;
And Conscience troubled with the dull account,
Had dropp'd her tale, and slumber'd o'er th' amount:
But, struck by daring guilt, alert she rose,
Disturb'd, alarm'd, and could no more repose;
All hopes of friendship, and of peace, were past,
And every view with gloom was overcast.
Hence from that day, that day of shame and sin,
Arose the restless enmity within.
On no resource could Fulham now rely,
Doom'd all expedients, and in vain, to try;
For Conscience, roused, sat boldly on her throne,
Watch'd every thought, attack'd the foe alone,
And with envenom'd sting drew forth the inward groan
Expedients fail'd that brought relief before,
In vain his alms gave comfort to the poor,
Give what he would, to him the comfort came no more:
Not prayer avail'd, and, when (his crimes confess'd)
He felt some ease—she said—"Are they redress'd?
You still retain the profit, and be sure,
Long as it lasts this anguish shall endure."
Fulham still tried to soothe her, cheat, mislead;
But Concience laid her finger on the deed,
And read the crime with power, and all that must succeed:
He tried t' expel her, but was sure to find
Her strength increased by all that he design'd;
Nor ever was his groan more loud and deep,
Than when refresh'd she rose from momentary sleep.
Now desperate grown, weak, harass'd, and afraid,
From new allies he sought for doubtful aid;
To thought itself he strove to bid adieu,
And from devotions to diversions flew;
He took a poor domestic for a slave,
(Though avarice grieved to see the price he gave);
Upon his board, once frugal, press'd a load
Of viands rich, the appetite to goad;
The long-protracted meal, the sparkling cup,
Fought with his gloom, and kept his courage up:

Soon as the morning came, there met his eyes
Accounts of wealth, that he might reading rise;
To profit then he gave some active hours,
Till food and wine again should renovate his powers:
Yet, spite of all defence, of every aid,
The watchful Foe her close attention paid;
In every thoughtful moment on she press'd,
And gave at once her dagger to his breast;
He waked at midnight, and the fears of sin,
As waters, through a bursten dam, broke in;
Nay, in the banquet, with his friends around,
When all their cares and half their crimes were drown'd,
Would some chance act awake the slumbering fear,
And care and crime in all their strength appear:
The news is read, a guilty victim swings,
And troubled looks proclaim the bosom stings;
Some pair are wed; this brings the wife in view,
And some divorced: this shows the parting too;
Nor can he hear of evil word or deed,
But they to thought, and thought to sufferings lead.
Such was his life—no other changes came,
The hurrying day, the conscious night the same;
The night of horror—when he starting cried,
To the poor startled sinner at his side;
"Is it in law? am I condemn'd to die?
Let me escape!——I'll give—oh! let me fly—
How! but a dream—no judges! dungeon! chain!
Or these grim men!—I will not sleep again.—
Wilt thou, dread being! thus thy promise keep?
Day is thy time, and wilt thou murder sleep?
Sorrow and want repose, and wilt thou come,
Nor give one hour of pure untroubled gloom?
"Oh! Conscience! Conscience! man's most faithful friend,
Him canst thou comfort, ease, relieve, defend;
But if he will thy friendly checks forego,
Thou art, oh! woe for me his deadliest foe!"

TALE XV.

ADVICE;

OR,

THE 'SQUIRE AND THE PRIEST.

His hours fill'd up with riots, banquets, sports——
And never noted in him any study,
Any retirement, any sequestration.—*Henry V.*

You cram these words into mine ears, against
The stomach of my sense.—*Tempest.*

A WEALTHY Lord of far-extended land
Had all that pleased him placed at his command
Widow'd of late, but finding much relief
In the world's comforts, he dismiss'd his grief;
He was by marriage of his daughters eased,
And knew his sons could marry if they pleased,
Meantime in travel he indulged the boys,
And kept no spy nor partner of his joys.

These joys, indeed, were of the grosser kind,
That fed the cravings of an earthly mind;
A mind that, conscious of its own success,
Felt the reproach his neighbours would express.
Long at th' indulgent board he loved to sit,
Where joy was laughter, and profaneness wit;
And such the guest and manners of the Hall,
No wedded lady on the 'Squire would call:
Here reign'd a Favourite, and her triumph gain'd
O'er other favourites who before had reign'd;
Reserved and modest seem'd the nymph to be,
Knowing her lord was charm'd with modesty;
For he, a sportsman keen the more enjoy'd,
The greater value had the thing destroy'd.

Our Squire declared, that, from a wife released
He would no more give trouble to a Priest;
Seem'd it not then, ungrateful and unkind,
That he should trouble from the priesthood find?

The Church he honour'd, and he gave the due
And full respect to every son he knew
But envied those who had the luck to meet
A gentle pastor, civil, and discreet;
Who never bold and hostile sermon penn'd,
To wound a sinner, or to shame a friend;
One whom no being either shunn'd or fear'd,
Such must be loved wherever they appear'd.

Not such the stern old Rector of the time
Who scoth'd no culprit, and who spared no crime;
Who would his fears and his contempt express
For irreligion and licentiousness:
Of him our Village Lord, his guests among
By speech vindictive proved his feelings stung.

"Were he a bigot," said the 'Squire, "whose zeal
Condemn'd us all, I should disdain to feel:
But when a man of parts, in college train'd,
Prates of our conduct—who would not be pain'd?
While he declaims (where no one dares reply)
On men abandon'd, grov'ling in the sty
(Like beasts in human shape) of shameless luxury,
Yet with a patriot's zeal I stand the shock
Of vile rebuke, example to his flock:
But let this Rector, thus severe and proud,
Change his wide surplice for a narrow shroud
And I will place within his seat a youth,
Train'd by the Graces to explain the Truth,
Then shall the flock with gentle hand be led,
By wisdom won, and by compassion fed."

This purposed Teacher was a sister's son,
Who of her children gave the priesthood one;
And she had early train'd for this employ
The pliant talents of her college-boy:
At various times her letters painted all
Her brother's views—the manners of the Hall;
The rector's harshness, and the mischief made
By chiding those whom preachers should persuade,
This led the youth to views of easy life,
A friendly patron, an obliging wife;
His tithe, his glebe, the garden and the steed,
With books as many as he wish'd to read.

All this accorded with the Uncle's will:
He loved a priest compliant, easy, still;
Sums he had often to his favourite sent,
"To be," he wrote, "in manly freedom spent,
For well it pleased his spirit to assist
An honest lad, who scorn'd a Methodist:"
His mother, too, in her maternal care,
Bade him of canting hypocrites beware;

Who from his duties would his heart seduce,
And make his talents of no earthly use.
Soon must a trial of his worth be made—
The ancient priest is to the tomb convey'd;
And the youth summon'd from a serious friend
His guide and host, new duties to attend.
Three months before, the nephew and the 'Squire
Saw mutual worth to praise and to admire;
And though the one too early left his wine,
The other still exclaim'd—"My boy will shine:
Yea I perceive that he will soon improve,
And I shall form the very guide I love;
Decent abroad, he will my name defend,
And when at home, be social and unbend."
The plan was specious, for the mind of *James*
Accorded duly with his uncle's schemes:
He then aspired not to a higher name
Than sober clerks of moderate talents claim;
Gravely to pray, and reverendly to preach,
Was all he saw, good youth! within his reach:
Thus may a mass of sulphur long abide,
Cold and inert, but, to the flame applied,
Kindling it blazes, and consuming turns
To smoke and poison, as it boils and burns.
James, leaving college, to a Preacher stray'd;
What call'd he knew not—but the call obey'd:
Mild, idle, pensive, ever led by those
Who could some specious novelty propose:
Humbly he listen'd, while the preacher dwelt
On touching themes, and strong emotions felt;
And in this night was fix'd that pliant will
To one sole point, and he retains it still.
At first his care was to himself confined;
Himself assured, he gave it to mankind.
His zeal grew active—honest, earnest zeal
And comfort dealt to him, he long'd to deal;
He to his favourite preacher now withdrew
Was taught to teach, instructed to subdue;
And train'd for ghostly warfare, when the call
Of his new duties reach'd him from the Hall.
Now to the Squire, although alert and stout,
Came unexpected an attack of gout;
And the grieved patron felt such serious pain:
He never thought to see a church again.
Thrice had the youthful rector taught the crowd,
Whose growing numbers spoke his powers aloud,
Before the patron could himself rejoice
(His pain still lingering) in the general voice.

For he imputed all this early fame
To graceful manner, and the well-known name;
And to himself assumed a share of praise,
For worth and talents he was pleased to raise.
A month had flown, and with it fled disease;
What pleased before, began again to please;
Emerging daily from his chamber's gloom,
He found his old sensations hurrying home;
Then call'd his nephew, and exclaim'd, "My boy
Let us again the balm of life enjoy;
The foe has left me, and I deem it right,
Should he return, to arm me for the fight.
Thus spoke the 'Squire, the favourite nymph stood by
And viewed the priest with insult in her eye:
She thrice had heard him when he boldly spoke
On dangerous points, and fear'd he would revoke:
For James she loved not—and her manner told,
"This warm affection will be quickly cold:"
And still she fear'd impression might be made
Upon a subject, nervous and decay'd;
She knew her danger and had no desire
Of reformation in the gallant 'Squire;
And felt an envious pleasure in her breast
To see the rector daunted and distress'd.
Again the Uncle to the youth applied—
"Cast, my dear lad, that cursed gloom aside.
There are for all things time and place, appear
Grave in your pulpit, and be merry here:
Now take your wine—for woes a sure resource,
And the best prelude to a long discourse."
James half obey'd, but cast an angry eye
On the fair lass, who still stood watchful by;
Resolving thus, "I have my fears—but still
I must perform my duties, and I will;
No love, no interest, shall my mind control;
Better to lose my comforts than my soul;
Better my uncle's favour to abjure
Than the upbraidings of my heart endure"
He took his glass, and then address'd the 'Squire:
"I feel not well, permit me to retire."
The 'Squire conceived that the ensuing day
Gave him these terrors for the grand essay,
When he himself should this young preacher try,
And stand before him with observant eye:
This raised compassion in his manly breast,
And he would send the rector to his rest:
Yet first, in soothing voice—"A moment stay,
And these suggestions of a friend obey;

Treasure these hints, if fame or peace you prize,—
The bottle emptied I shall close my eyes.
" On every priest a two-fold care attends,
To prove his talents, and insure his friends:
First, of the first—your stores at once produce;
And bring your reading to its proper use:
On doctrines dwell, and every point enforce
By quoting much, the scholar's sure resource;
For he alone can show us on each head
What ancient schoolmen and sage fathers said:
No worth has knowledge, if you fail to show
How well you studied and how much you know:
In faith your subject, and you judge it right
On theme so dark to cast a ray of light;
Be it that faith the orthodox maintain,
Found in the rubric, what the creeds explain:
Fail not to show us on this ancient faith
(And quote the passage) what some martyr saith:
Dwell not one moment on a faith that shocks
The minds of men sincere and orthodox;
That gloomy faith, that robs the wounded mind
Of all the comfort it was wont to find
From virtuous acts, and to the soul denies
Its proper due for alms and charities;
That partial faith, that, weighing sins alone
Lets not a virtue for a fault atone,
That starving faith, that would our tables clear,
And make one dreadful Lent of all the year;
And cruel too, for this is faith that rends
Confiding beauties from protecting friends;
A faith that all embracing, what a gloom
Deep and terrific o'er the land would come!
What scenes of horror would that time disclose!
No sight but misery, and no sound but woes;
Your nobler faith, in loftier style convey'd,
Shall be with praise and admiration paid.
On points like these your hearers all admire
A preacher's depth, and nothing more require:
Shall we a studious youth to college send,
That every clown his words may comprehend?
'Tis for your glory, when your hearers own
Your learning matchless, but the sense unknown.
" Thus honour gain'd, learn now to gain a friend,
And the sure way is—never to offend:
For, James, consider—what your neighbours do
Is their own business, and concerns not you:
Shun all resemblance to that forward race
Who preach of sins before a sinner's face;

And seem as if they overlook'd a pew
Only to drag a failing man in view:
Much should I feel, when groaning in disease,
If a rough hand upon my limb should seize;
But great my anger, if this hand were found
The very doctor's, who should make it sound:
So feel our minds, young Priest, so doubly feel
When hurt by those whose office is to heal.

"Yet of our duties you must something tell,
And must at times on sin and frailty dwell;
Here you may preach in easy, flowing style,
How errors cloud us, and how sins defile:
Here bring persuasive tropes and figures forth,
To show the poor that wealth is nothing worth;
That they, in fact, possess an ample share
Of the world's good, and feel not half its care;
Give them this comfort, and, indeed, my gout
In its full vigour causes me some doubt:
And let it always, for your zeal, suffice,
That vice you combat, in the abstract—vice:
The very captious will be quiet then;
We all confess we are offending men:
In lashing sin, of every stroke beware,
For sinners feel, and sinners you must spare;
In general satire, every man perceives
A slight attack, yet neither fears nor grieves;
But name th' offence, and you absolve the rest,
And point the dagger at a single breast.

"Yet are there sinners of a class so low,
That you with safety may the lash bestow;
Poachers, and drunkards, idle rogues, who feed
At others' cost, a marked correction need:
And all the better sort, who see your zeal,
Will love and reverence for their pastor feel;
Reverence for one who can inflict the smart,
And love, because he deals them not a part.

"Remember well what love and age advise;
A quiet rector is a parish prize,
Who in his learning has a decent pride;
Who to his people is a gentle guide;
Who only hints at failings that he sees;
Who loves his glebe, his patron, and his ease,
And finds the way to fame and profit is to please."

The Nephew answer'd not, except a sigh
And look of sorrow might be term'd reply;
He saw the fearful hazard of his state,
And hold with truth and safety strong debate;
Nor long he reason'd, for the zealous youth
Resolved, though timid, to profess the truth;

And though his friend should like a lion roar,
Truth would he preach, neither less nor more.
The bells had toll'd—arrived the time of prayer
The flock assembled, and the 'Squire was there:
And now can poet sing, or proseman say,
The disappointment of that trying day?
As he who long had train'd a favourite steed,
(Whose blood and bone gave promise of his speed),
Sanguine with hope, he runs with partial eye
O'er every feature, and his bets are high;
Of triumph sure, he sees the rivals start,
And waits their coming with exulting heart;
Forestalling glory, with impatient glance,
And sure to see his conquering steed advance;
The conquering steed advances—luckless day!
A rival's *Herod* bears the prize away,
Nor second his, nor third, but lagging last,
With hanging head he comes, by all surpass'd:
Surprise and wrath the owner's mind inflame,
Love turns to scorn, and glory ends in shame;—
Thus waited, high in hope, the partial 'Squire,
Eager to hear, impatient to admire:
When the young Preacher, in the tones that find
A certain passage to the kindling mind,
With air and accent strange, impressive, sad,
Alarm'd the judge—he trembled for the lad:
But when the text announced the power of grace,
Amazement scowl'd upon his clouded face,
At this degenerate son of his illustrious race;
Staring he stood, till hope again arose,
That James might well define the words he chose
For this he listen'd—but alas! he found
The preacher always on forbidden ground.
And now the Uncle left the hated pew,
With James and James's conduct in his view;
A long farewell to all his favourite schemes!
For now no crazed fanatic's frantic dreams
Seem'd vile as James's conduct, or as James:
All he had long derided, hated, fear'd,
This, from the chosen youth, the uncle heard;—
The needless pause, the fierce disorder'd air,
The groan for sin, the vehemence of prayer,
Gave birth to wrath, that, in a long discourse
Of grace triumphant, rose to fourfold force:
He found his thoughts despised, his rules transgress'd,
And while the anger kindled in his breast,
The pain must be endured that could not be express'd;
Each new idea more inflamed his ire,
As fuel thrown upon a rising fire:

A hearer yet, he sought by threatening sign
To ease his heart, and awe the young divine;
But James refused those angry looks to meet,
Till he dismiss'd his flock, and left his seat:
Exhausted then he felt his trembling flame,
But fix'd his soul,—his sentiments the same;
And therefore wise it seem'd to fly from rage,
And seek for shelter in his parsonage;
There, if forsaken, yet consoled to find
Some comforts left, though not a few resign'd;
There, if he lost an erring parent's love,
An honest conscience must the cause approve;
If the nice palate were no longer fed,
The mind enjoy'd delicious thoughts instead;
And if some part of earthly good was flown,
Still was the tithe of ten good farms his own.

Fear now, and discord, in the village reign,
The cool remonstrate, and the meek complain;
But there is war within, and wisdom pleads in vain.
Now dreads the Uncle, and proclaims his dread,
Lest the Boy-priest should turn each rustic head;
The certain converts cost him certain woe,
The doubtful fear lest they should join the foe;
Matrons of old, with whom he used to joke,
Now pass his honour with a pious look:
Lasses, who met him once with lively airs,
Now cross his way, and gravely walk to prayers:
An old companion, whom he long has loved,
By coward fears confess'd his conscience moved;
As the third bottle gave its spirit forth,
And they bore witness to departing worth,
The friend arose, and he too would depart:—
"Man," said the 'Squire, "thou wert not wont to start
Hast thou attended to that foolish boy,
Who would abridge all comforts, or destroy?"

Yes, he had listen'd, who had slumber'd long,
And was convinced that something must be wrong:
But, though affected, still his yielding heart,
And craving palate, took the Uncle's part;
Wine now oppress'd him, who, when free from wine,
Could seldom clearly utter his design;
But though by nature and indulgence weak,
Yet, half converted, he resolved to speak;
And, speaking, own'd, "that in his mind the Youth
Had gifts and learning, and that truth was truth;
The 'Squire he honour'd, and, for his poor part,
He hated nothing like a hollow heart:

But 'twas a maxim he had often tried,
That right was right, and there he would abide;
He honour'd learning, and he would confess
The preacher had his talents—more or less:
Why not agree? he thought the young divine
Had no such strictness—they might drink and dine;
For them sufficient—but he said before,—
That truth was truth, and he would drink no more."
This heard the 'Squire with mix'd contempt and pain
He fear'd the Priest this recreant sot would gain.
The favourite Nymph, though not a convert made,
Conceived the man she scorn'd her cause would aid,
And when the spirits of her lord were low,
The lass presumed the wicked cause to show;
"It was the wretched life his Honour led.
And would draw vengeance on his guilty head;
Their loves (Heav'n knew how dreadfully distress'd
The thought had made her!) were as yet unbless'd:
And till the church had sanction'd"—Here she saw
The wrath that forced her trembling to withdraw.
Add to these outward ills, some inward light,
That show'd him all was not correct and right:
Though now he less indulged—and to the poor,
From day to day, sent alms from door to door;
Though he some ease from easy virtues found,
Yet conscience told him he could not compound;
But must himself the darling sin deny,
Change the whole heart,—but here a heavy sigh
Proclaim'd, "How vast the toil! and ah! how weak am I!
James too has trouble—he divided sees
A parish, once harmonious and at ease:
With him united are the simply meek,
The warm, the sad, the nervous, and the weak;
The rest his Uncle's, save the few beside,
Who own no doctrine, and obey no guide;
With stragglers of each adverse camp, who lend
Their aid to both, but each in turn offend.
Though zealous still, yet he begins to feel
The heat too fierce, that glows in vulgar zeal;
With pain he hears his simple friends relate
Their week's experience, and their woful state:
With small temptation struggling every hour,
And bravely battling with the tempting power;
His native sense is hurt by strange complaints
Of inward motions in these warring saints;
Who never cast on sinful bait a look,
But they perceive the devil at the hook:

Grieved, yet compell'd to smile, he finds it hard
Against the blunders of conceit to guard;
He sighs to hear the jests his converts cause,
He cannot give their erring zeal applause;
But finds it inconsistent to condemn
The slights and follies he has nursed in them:
These, in opposing minds, contempt produce,
Or mirth occasion, or provoke abuse;
On each momentous theme disgrace they bring
And give to Scorn her poison and her sting.

TALE XVI.

THE CONFIDANT.

Think'st thou I'd make a life of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the moon,
With fresh suspicion?—*Othello.*

Why hast thou lost the fresh blood in thy cheeks,
And given my treasure and my rights in thee
To thick-eyed musing and curs'd melancholy?—1 *Henry IV.*

Anna was young and lovely—in her eye
The glance of beauty, in her cheek the dye;
Her shape was slender, and her features small,
But graceful, easy, unaffected all:
The liveliest tints her youthful face disclosed;
There beauty sparkled, and there health reposed;
For the pure blood that flush'd that rosy cheek
Spoke what the heart forbad the tongue to speak;
And told the feelings of that heart as well,
Nay, with more candour than the tongue could tell:
Though this fair lass mad with the wealthy dwelt,
Yet like the damsel of the cot she felt;
And, at the distant hint or dark surmise,
The blood into the mantling cheek would rise.
Now Anna's station frequent terrors wrought
In one whose looks were with such meaning fraught:
For on a Lady, as an humble friend,
It was her painful office to attend.
Her duties here were of the usual kind—
And some the body harass'd, some the mind:
Billets she wrote, and tender stories read,
To make the Lady sleepy in her bed;
She play'd at whist, but with inferior skill,
And heard the summons as a call to drill;
Music was ever pleasant till she play'd
At a request that no request convey'd;
The Lady's tales with anxious looks she heard,
For she must witness what her Friend averr'd;

The Lady's taste she must in all approve,
Hate whom she hated, whom she loved must love
These, with the various duties of her place,
With care she studied, and perform'd with grace;
She veil'd her troubles in a mask of ease,
And show'd her pleasure was a power to please.
Such were the Damsel's duties; she was poor—
Above a servant, but with service more:
Men on her face with careless freedom gazed,
Nor thought how painful was the glow they raised
A wealthy few to gain her favour tried,
But not the favour of a grateful bride;
They spoke their purpose with an easy air,
That sham'd and frighten'd the dependent fair;
Past time she view'd, the passing time to cheat,
But nothing found to make the present sweet;
With pensive soul she read life's future page,
And saw dependent, poor, repining age.
But who shall dare t' assert what *years* may bring
When wonders from the passing *hour* may spring?
There dwelt a Yeoman in the place, whose mind
Was gentle, generous, cultivated, kind;
For thirty years he labour'd; fortune then
Placed the mild rustic with superior men:
A richer Stafford who had lived to save
What he had treasured to the poorer gave;
Who with a sober mind that treasure view'd,
And the slight studies of his youth renew'd:
He not profoundly, but discreetly read,
And a fair mind with useful culture fed.
Then thought of marriage—"But the great," said he
"I shall not suit, nor will the meaner me:"
Anna he saw, admired her modest air;
He thought her virtuous, and he knew her fair;
Love raised his pity for her humble state,
And prompted wishes for her happier fate;
No pride in money would his feelings wound,
Nor vulgar manners hurt him and confound:
He then the Lady at the Hall address'd,
Sought her consent, and his regard express'd;
Yet, if some cause his earnest wish denied,
He begg'd to know it, and he bow'd and sigh'd.
The Lady own'd that she was loth to part,
But praised the damsel for her gentle heart,
Her pleasing person, and her blooming health;
But ended thus, "Her virtue is her wealth."
"Then is she rich!" he cried, with lively air;
"But whence, so please you, came a lass so fair?"

"A placeman's child was Anna, one who died
And left a widow by afflictions tried;
She to support her infant daughter strove,
But early left the object of her love;
Her youth, her beauty, and her orphan-state
Gave a kind countess interest in her fate:
With her she dwelt, and still might dwelling be,
When the earl's folly caused the lass to flee;
A second friend was she compell'd to shun,
By the rude offers of an unchecked son;
I found her then, and with a mother's love
Regard the gentle girl whom you approve;
Yet, e'en with me protection is not peace,
Nor man's designs, nor beauty's trials cease:
Like sordid boys by costly fruit they feel,
They will not purchase, but they try to steal."

Now this good Lady, like a witness true,
Told but the truth, and all the truth she knew;
And 'tis our duty and our pain to show
Truth this good lady had not means to know.
Yes, there was lock'd within the damsel's breast
A fact important to be now confess'd;
Gently, my muse, th' afflicting tale relate,
And have some feeling for a sister's fate.

Where Anna dwelt, a conquering hero came,—
An Irish captain, *Sedley* was his name:
And he too had that same prevailing art,
That gave soft wishes to the virgin's heart:
In years they differ'd; he had thirty seen
When this young beauty counted just fifteen;
But still they were a lovely lively pair,
And trod on earth as if they trod on air.

On love, delightful theme! the captain dwelt
With force still growing with the hopes he felt;
But with some caution and reluctance told,
He had a father crafty, harsh, and old;
Who, as possessing much, would much expect,
Or both, for ever, from his love reject.
Why then offence to one so powerful give,
Who (for their comfort) had not long to live.

With this poor prospect the deluded maid,
In words confiding, was indeed betray'd;
And, soon as terrors in her bosom rose,
The hero fled; they hinder'd his repose.
Deprived of him, she to a parent's breast
Her secret trusted, and her pains impress'd;
Let her to town (so prudence urged) repair,
To shun disgrace, at least to hide it there;

But ere she went, the luckless damsel pray'd
A chosen friend might lend her timely aid:
"Yes! my soul's sister, my Eliza, come,
Hear her last sigh, and ease thy Anna's doom:"
"'Tis a fool's wish," the angry father cried,
But, lost in troubles of his own, complied;
And dear Eliza to her friend was sent,
T' indulge that wish, and be her punishment:
The time arrived, and brought a tenfold dread;
The time was past, and all the terror fled;
The infant died: the face resumed each charm,
And reason now brought trouble and alarm:
Should her Eliza—no! she was too just,
"Too good and kind—but ah! too young to trust."
Anna return'd, her former place resumed,
And faded beauty with new grace re-bloom'd;
And if some whispers of the past were heard,
They died innoxious, as no cause appear'd;
But other cares on Anna's bosom press'd,
She saw her father gloomy and distress'd;
He died o'erwhelmed with debt, and soon was shed
The filial sorrow o'er a mother dead:
She sought Eliza's arms—that faithful friend was wed;
Then was comparison by the countess shown,
And all th' adventures of her life are known.
And now, beyond her hopes—no longer tried
By slavish awe!—she lived a Yeoman's bride;
Then bless'd her lot, and with a grateful mind
Was careful, cheerful, vigilant, and kind:
The gentle husband felt supreme delight,
Bless'd by her joy, and happy in her sight;
He saw with pride in every friend and guest
High admiration and regard express'd:
With greater pride, and with superior joy,
He look'd exulting on his first-born boy;
To her fond breast the wife her infant strain'd,
Some feelings utter'd, some were not explain'd;
And she enraptured with her treasure grew,
The sight familiar, but the pleasure new.
Yet there appear'd within that tranquil state
Some threat'ning prospect of uncertain fate;
Between the married when a secret lies,
It wakes suspicion from enforced disguise:
Still thought the Wife upon her absent friend,
With all that must upon her truth depend;
"There is no being in the world beside,
Who can discover what that friend will hide;
Who knew the fact, knew not my name or state,
Who these can tell cannot the fact relate:

But thou, Eliza, canst the whole impart,
And all my safety is thy generous heart.'
Mix'd with these fears—but light and transient these—
Fled years of peace, prosperity, and ease;
So tranquil all, that scarce a gloomy day
For days of gloom unmix'd prepared the way:
One eve, the Wife, still happy in her state,
Sang gaily, thoughtless of approaching fate;
Then came a letter, that (received in dread
Not unobserved) she in confusion read;
The substance this—"Her friend rejoiced to find
That she had riches with a grateful mind;
While poor Eliza had, from place to place,
Been lured by hope to labour for disgrace:
That every scheme her wandering husband tried,
Pain'd while he lived, and perish'd when he died."
She then of want in angry style complain'd,
Her child a burthen to her life remain'd, [sustain'd
Her kindred shunn'd her prayers, no friend her soul
"Yet why neglected? Dearest Anna knew
Her worth once tried, her friendship ever true;
She hoped, she trusted, though by wants oppress'd,
To lock the treasured secret in her breast;
Yet, vex'd by trouble, must apply to one,
For kindness due to her for kindness done."
In Anna's mind was tumult, in her face
Flushings of dread had momentary place:
"I must," she judged, "these cruel lines expose,
Or fears, or worse than fears, my crime disclose."
The letter shown, he said, with sober smile,—
"Anna, your Friend has not a friendly style:
Say where could you with this fair lady dwell,
Who boasts of secrets that she scorns to tell?"
'At school," she answer'd: he "at school!" replied;
"Nay, then I know the secrets you would hide;
Some early longings these, without dispute,
Some youthful gaspings for forbidden fruit:
Why so disorder'd, love? are such the crimes
That give us sorrow in our graver times?
Come, take a present for your friend, and rest
In perfect peace—you find you are confess'd."
This cloud, though past, alarm'd the conscious wife,
Presaging gloom and sorrow for her life;
Who to her answer join'd a fervent prayer,
That her Eliza would a sister spare;
If she again—but was there cause?—should send,
Let her direct—and then she named a friend:

A sad expedient untried friends to trust,
And still to fear the tried may be unjust:
Such is his pain, who, by his debt oppress'd,
Seeks by new bonds a temporary rest.
Few were her peaceful days till Anna read
The words she dreaded, and had cause to dread:—
"Did she believe, did she, unkind, suppose
That thus Eliza's friendship was to close?
No! though she tried, and her desire was plain,
To break the friendly bond, she strove in vain·
Ask'd she for silence? why so loud the call,
And yet the token of her love so small?
By means like these will you attempt to bind
And check the movements of an injured mind?
Poor as I am, I shall be proud to show
What dangerous secrets I may safely know:
Secrets to men of jealous minds convey'd
Have many a noble house in ruins laid:
Anna, I trust, although with wrongs beset,
And urg'd by want, I shall be faithful yet;
But what temptation may from these arise,
To take a slighted woman by surprise,
Becomes a subject for your serious care—
For who offends, must for offence prepare."
Perplex'd, dismay'd, the Wife foresaw her doom,
A day deferr'd was yet a day to come;
But still, though painful her suspended state,
She dreaded more the crisis of her fate;
Better to die than Stafford's scorn to meet,
And her strange friend perhaps would be discreet:
Presents she sent, and made a strong appeal
To woman's feelings, begging her to feel;
With too much force she wrote of jealous men,
And her tears falling spoke beyond the pen;
Eliza's silence she again implored,
And promised all that prudence could afford.
For looks composed and careless, Anna tried;
She seem'd in trouble, and unconscious sigh'd:
The faithful Husband, who devoutly loved
His silent partner, with concern reproved:
"What secret sorrows on my Anna press,
That love may not partake, nor care redress?"
"None, none," she answer'd, with a look so kind
That the fond man determined to be blind.
A few succeeding weeks of brief repose
In Anna's cheek revived the faded rose:
A hue like this the western sky displays,
That glows awhile, and withers as we gaze.

Again the Friend's tormenting letter came—
"The wants she suffer'd were affection's shame;
She with her child a life of terrors led,
Unhappy fruit! but of a lawful bed:
Her friend was tasting every bliss in life,
The joyful mother, and the wealthy wife;
While she was placed in doubt, in fear, in want,
To starve on trifles that the happy grant;
Poorly for all her faithful silence paid,
And tantalized by ineffectual aid.
She could not thus a beggar's lot endure;
She wanted something permanent and sure:
If they were friends, then equal be their lot,
And she was free to speak if they were not."

Despair and terror seized the Wife, to find
The artful workings of a vulgar mind:
Money she had not, but the hint of dress
Taught her new bribes, new terrors to redress:
She with such feeling then described her woes,
That envy's self might on the view repose;
Then to a mother's pains she made appeal,
And painted grief like one compell'd to feel.
Yes! so she felt, that in her air, her face,
In every purpose, and in every place;
In her slow motion, in her languid mien,
The grief, the sickness of her soul, were seen.

Of some mysterious ill, the Husband sure
Desired to trace it, for he hoped to cure;
Something he knew obscurely, and had seen
His wife attend a cottage on the green;
Love, loth to wound, endured conjecture long,
Till fear would speak, and spoke in language strong.

"All I must know, my Anna—truly know
Whence these emotions, terrors, troubles flow;
Give me thy grief, and I will fairly prove
Mine is no selfish, no ungenerous love."

Now Anna's soul the seat of strife became,
Fear with respect contended, love with shame;
But fear prevailing was the ruling guide,
Prescribing what to show and what to hide.

"It is my friend," she said—"but why disclose
A woman's weakness struggling with her woes?
Yes, she has grieved me by her fond complaints,
The wrongs she suffers, the distress she paints:
Something we do—but she afflicts me still,
And says, with power to help, I want the will;
This plaintive style I pity and excuse,
Help when I can, and grieve when I refuse;

But here my useless sorrows I resign,
And will be happy in a love like thine."
The Husband doubted; he was kind but cool:—
"'Tis a strong friendship to arise at school;
Once more then, love, once more the sufferer aid,—
I too can pity, but I must upbraid:
Of these vain feelings then thy bosom free,
Nor be o'erwhelm'd by useless sympathy."
The Wife again despatch'd the useless bribe
Again essay'd her terrors to describe:
Again with kindest words entreated peace,
And begg'd her offerings for a time might cease.
A calm succeeded, but too like the one
That causes terror ere the storm comes on:
A secret sorrow lived in Anna's heart,
In Stafford's mind a secret fear of art;
Not long they lasted—this determined foe
Knew all her claims, and nothing would forego;
Again her letter came, where Anna read,
"My child, one cause of my distress, is dead:
Heav'n has my infant:"—"Heartless wretch!" she cried,
"Is this thy joy?"—"I am no longer tied:
Nor will I, hast'ning to my friend partake
Her cares and comforts, and no more forsake;
Now shall we both in equal station move,
Save that my friend enjoys a husband's love."
Complaint and threats so strong, the Wife amazed,
Who wildly on her cottage-neighbour gazed;
Her tones, her trembling, first betray'd her grief
When floods of tears gave anguish its relief.
She fear'd that Stafford would refuse assent,
And knew her selfish Friend would not relent;
She must petition, yet delay'd the task,
Ashamed, afraid, and yet compell'd to ask;
Unknown to him some object fill'd her mind,
And, once suspicious, he became unkind:
They sate one evening, each absorb'd in gloom,
When hark! a noise and rushing to the room,
The Friend tripp'd lightly in, and laughing said, "I come."
Anna received her with an anxious mind,
And meeting whisper'd, "Is Eliza kind?"
Reserved and cool, the Husband sought to prove
The depth and force of this mysterious love.
To nought that pass'd between the Stranger-friend
And his meek partner, seem'd he to attend;
But, anxious, listen'd to the lightest word
That might some knowledge of his guest afford;
And learn the reason one to him so dear
Should feel such fondness, yet betray such fear.

Soon he perceived this uninvited guest,
Unwelcome too, a sovereign power possess'd;
Lofty she was and careless, while the meek
And humbled Anna was afraid to speak:
As mute she listen'd with a painful smile,
Her friend sate laughing and at ease the while,
Telling her idle tales with all the glee
Of careless and unfeeling levity.
With calm, good sense he knew his Wife endued,
And now with wounded pride her conduct view'd;
Her speech was low, her every look convey'd—
"I am a slave, subservient and afraid."
All trace of comfort vanish'd, if she spoke,
The noisy friend upon her purpose broke;
To her remarks with insolence replied,
And her assertions doubted or denied:
While the meek Anna like an infant shook,
Woe-struck and trembling at the serpent's look.
"There is," said Stafford, "yes, there is a cause—
This creature frights her, overpowers and awes."
Six weeks had pass'd—"In truth, my love, this friend
Has liberal notions; what does she intend?
Without a hint she came, and will she stay
Till she receives the hint to go away?"
Confused the Wife replied, in spite of truth,
"I love the dear companion of my youth."
"'Tis well," said Stafford, "then your love renew;
Trust me, your rivals, Anna, will be few."
Though playful this, she felt too much distress'd
T' admit the consolation of a jest:
Ill she reposed, and in her dreams would sigh,
And murmuring forth her anguish, beg to die:
With sunken eye, slow pace, and pallid cheek,
She look'd confusion, and she fear'd to speak.
All this the Friend beheld, for, quick of sight,
She knew the husband eager for her flight;
And that by force alone she could retain
The lasting comforts she had hope to gain:
She now perceived to win her post for life;
She must infuse fresh terrors in the wife:
Must bid to friendship's feebler ties adieu,
And boldly claim the object in her view:
She saw the husband's love, and knew the power
His friend might use in some propitious hour.
Meantime the anxious Wife, from pure distress
Assuming courage, said, "I will confess;"
But with her children felt a parent's pride,
And sought once more the hated truth to hide.

Offended, grieved, impatient, Stafford bore
The odious change, till he could bear no more;
A friend to truth, in speech and action plain,
He held all fraud and cunning in disdain;
But fraud to find, and falsehood to detect,
For once he fled to measures indirect.

One day the friends were seated in that room
The Guest with care adorn'd, and named her home;
To please the eye there curious prints were placed,
And some light volumes to amuse the taste;
Letters and music, on a table laid,
The favourite studies of the fair betray'd;
Beneath the window was the toilet spread,
And the fire gleam'd upon a crimson bed.

In Anna's looks and falling tears were seen
How interesting had their subjects been:
'Oh! then,' resumed the friend, "I plainly find
That you and Stafford know each other's mind;
I must depart, must on the world be thrown,
Like one discarded, worthless and unknown;
But, shall I carry, and to please a foe,
A painful secret in my bosom? No!
Think not your Friend a reptile you may tread
Beneath your feet, and say, the worm is dead;
I have some feeling and will not be made
The scorn of her whom love cannot persuade;
Would not your word, your slightest wish, effect
All that I hope, petition, or expect?
The power you have, but you the use decline—
Proof that you feel not, or you fear not mine.
There was a time, when I, a tender maid,
Flew at a call, and your desires obey'd;
A very mother to the child became,
Consoled your sorrow, and conceal'd your shame;
But now, grown rich and happy, from the door
You thrust a bosom-friend despised and poor;
That child alive, its mother might have known
The hard, ungrateful spirit she has shown."

Here paused the Guest, and Anna cried at length—
"You try me, cruel friend! beyond my strength:
Would I had been beside my infant laid,
Where none would vex me, threaten, or upbraid!"

In Anna's looks the friend beheld despair;
Her speech she soften'd, and composed her air,
Yet while professing love, she answer'd still—
"You can befriend me, but you want the will."
They parted thus, and Anna went her way,
To shed her secret sorrows, and to pray

Stafford, amused with books, and fond of home,
By reading oft dispell'd the evening gloom:
History or tale—all heard him with delight,
And thus was pass'd this memorable night.
The listening Friend bestow'd a flattering smile;
A sleeping boy the mother held the while;
And ere she fondly bore him to his bed,
On his fair face the tear of anguish shed.
And now his task resumed, "My tale," said he,
"Is short and sad, short may our sadness be!"—
"The Caliph Harun, as historians tell,
Ruled, for a tyrant, admirably well;
Where his own pleasures were not touch'd, to men
He was humane, and sometimes even then;
Harun was fond of fruits, and gardens fair,
And woe to all whom he found poaching there:
Among his pages was a lively Boy,
Eager in search of every trifling joy;
His feelings vivid, and his fancy strong,
He sigh'd for pleasure while he shrank from wrong,
When by the Caliph in the garden placed,
He saw the treasures which he long'd to taste:
And oft alone he ventured to behold
Rich hanging fruits with rind of glowing gold;
Too long he stay'd forbidden bliss to view,
His virtue failing as his longings grew;
Athirst and wearied with the noontide heat,
Fate to the garden led his luckless feet;
With eager eyes and open mouth he stood,
Smelt the sweet breath, and touch'd the fragrant food
The tempting beauty sparkling in the sun
Charm'd his young sense—he ate and was undone.
When the fond glutton paused, his eyes around
He turn'd, and eyes upon him turning found;
Pleased he beheld the spy, a brother page,
A friend allied in office and in age;
Who promised much that secret he would be.
But high the price he fix'd on secrecy.
"'Were you suspected, my unhappy friend,'
Began the Boy, 'where would your sorrows end?
In all the palace there is not a page
The Caliph would not torture in his rage
I think I see thee now impaled alive,
Writhing in pangs—but come, my friend! revive;
Had some beheld you, all your purse contains
Could not have saved you from terrific pains;
I scorn such meanness: and if not in debt,
Would not an asper on your folly set.'

"The hint was strong: young Osmyn search'd his store
For bribes, and found he soon could bribe no more:
That time arrived, for Osmyn's stock was small,
And the young tyrant now possess'd it all;
The cruel youth with his companions near,
Gave the broad hint that raised the sudden fear
Th' ungenerous insult now was daily shown,
And Osmyn's peace and honest pride were flown,
Then came augmenting woes, and fancy strong
Drew forms of suffering, a tormenting throng:
He felt degraded, and the struggling mind
Dar'd not be free, and could not be resigned:
And all his pains and fervent prayers obtained
Was truce from insult, while the fears remain'd.

"One day it chanced that this degraded Boy
And Tyrant-friend were fix'd at their employ;
Who now had thrown restraint and form aside,
And for his bribe in plainer speech applied:
'Long have I waited, and the last supply
Was but a pittance, yet how patient I!
But give me now what thy first terrors gave,
My speech shall praise thee, and my silence save.'

"Osmyn had found, in many a dreadful day,
The tyrant fiercer when he seem'd in play:
He begg'd forbearance; 'I have not to give;
Spare me awhile, although 'tis pain to live:
Oh! had that stolen fruit the power possess'd
To war with life, I now had been at rest.'

"'So fond of death,' replied the Boy,' 'tis plain
Thou hast no certain notion of the pain;
But to the Caliph were a secret shown.
Death has no pain that would be then unknown.'

"Now," says the story, "in a closet near,
The monarch seated, chanced the boys to hear;
There oft he came, when wearied on his throne,
To read, sleep, listen, pray, or be alone.

"The tale proceeds, when first the Caliph found
That he was robb'd, although alone, he frown'd;
And swore in wrath, that he would send the boy
Far from his notice, favour, or employ;
But gentler movements soothed his ruffled mind,
And his own failings taught him to be kind.

"Relenting thoughts then painted Osmyn young
His passion urgent, and temptation strong:
And that he suffer'd from that villain-Spy
Pains worse than death, till he desired to die;
Then if his morals had received a stain,
His bitter sorrows made him pure again:

To reason, pity lent her powerful aid,
For one so tempted, troubled, and betray'd;
And a free pardon the glad boy restored
To the kind presence of a gentle lord:
Who from his office and his country drove
That traitor-Friend, whom pains nor pray'rs could move;
Who raised the fears no mortal could endure,
And then with cruel av'rice sold the cure.
"My tale is ended; but to be applied,
I must describe the place where Caliphs hide."
Here both the females look'd alarm'd, distress'd,
With hurried passions hard to be express'd.
"It was a closet by a chamber placed,
Where slept a lady of no vulgar taste:
Her friend attended in that chosen room
That she had honoured and proclaimed her home;
To please the eye were chosen pictures placed,
And some light volumes to amuse the taste;
Letters and music on a table laid,
For much the lady wrote, and often played:
Beneath the window was a toilet spread,
And a fire gleam'd upon a crimson bed.'
He paused, he rose; with troubled joy the Wife
Felt the new era of her changeful life:
Frankness and love appear'd in Stafford's face,
And all her trouble to delight gave place.
Twice made the Guest an effort to sustain
Her feelings, twice resumed her seat in vain,
Nor could suppress her shame, nor could support her pain
Quick she retired, and all the dismal night
Thought of her guilt, her folly, and her flight
Then sought unseen her miserable home,
To think of comforts lost, and brood on wants to come.

TALE XVII.

RESENTMENT.

——She hath a tear for pity, and a hand
Open as day for melting charity;
Yet, notwithstanding, being incensed, is flint——
Her temper, therefore, must be well observed.—
2 Henry IV.

FEMALES there are of unsuspicious mind,
Easy and soft, and credulous and kind;
Who, when offended for the twentieth time,
Will hear th' offender and forgive the crime:
And there are others whom, like these to cheat,
Asks but the humblest effort of deceit;
But they, once injured, feel a strong disdain,
And, seldom pardoning, never trust again:
Urged by religion, they forgive—but yet
Guard the warm heart, and never more forget:
Those are like wax—apply them to the fire,
Melting they take th' impressions you desire;
Easy to mould, and fashion as you please,
And again moulded with an equal ease:
Like smelted iron *these* the forms retain,
But once impress'd will never melt again.

A busy port a serious Merchant made
His chosen place to recommence his trade;
And brought his lady, who, their children dead,
Their native seat of recent sorrow fled:
The husband duly on the quay was seen,
The wife at home became at length serene;
There in short time the social couple grew
With all acquainted, friendly with a few:
When the good lady, by disease assail'd,
In vain resisted—hope and science fail'd:
Then spake the female friends, by pity led,
"Poor merchant *Paul!* what think ye? will he wed?
A quiet, easy, kind, religious man,
Thus can he rest?—I wonder if he can."

He too, as grief subsided in his mind,
Gave place to notions of congenial kind:
Grave was the man, as we have told before;
His years were forty—he might pass for more;
Composed his features were, his stature low,
His air important, and his motion slow;
His dress became him, it was neat and plain,
The colour purple, and without a stain;
His words were few, and special was his care
In simplest terms his purpose to declare;
A man more civil, sober, and discreet,
More grave and courteous, you could seldom meet.
Though frugal he, yet sumptuous was his board,
As if to prove how much he could afford;
For though reserved himself, he loved to see
His table plenteous, and his neighbours free:
Among these friends he sat in solemn style,
And rarely soften'd to a sober smile;
For this, observant friends their reasons gave—
"Concerns so vast would make the idlest grave,
And for such man to be of language free,
Would seem incongruous as a singing tree:
Trees have their music, but the birds they shield
The pleasing tribute for protection yield:
Each ample tree the tuneful choir defends,
As this rich Merchant cheers his happy friends!"

In the same town it was his chance to meet
A gentle Lady, with a mind discreet:
Neither in life's decline, nor bloom of youth,
One famed for maiden modesty and truth:
By nature cool, in pious habits bred,
She look'd on lovers with a virgin's dread:
Deceivers, rakes, and libertines were they,
And harmless beauty their pursuit and prey;
As bad as giants in the ancient times
Were modern lovers, and the same their crimes:
Soon as she heard of her all-conquering charms,
At once she fled to her defensive arms;
Conn'd o'er the tales her maiden aunt had told,
And, statue-like, was motionless and cold:
From prayer of love, like that Pygmalion pray'd,
Ere the hard stone became the yielding maid—
A different change in this chaste nymph ensued,
And turn'd to stone the breathing flesh and blood:
Whatever youth described his wounded heart,
"He came to rob her, and she scorn'd his art:
And who of raptures once presumed to speak,
Told listening maids he thought them fond and weak

But should a worthy man his hopes display
In few plain words, and beg a *yes* or *nay*,
He would deserve an answer just and plain,
Since adulation only moved disdain—
Sir, if my friends object not, come again."
  Hence, our grave Lover, though he liked the face,
Praised not a feature—dwelt not on a grace:
But in the simplest terms declared his state,
"A widow'd man, who wished a virtuous mate,
Who fear'd neglect, and was compell'd to trust
Dependents wasteful, idle, or unjust;
Or should they not the trusted stores destroy,
At best, they could not help him to enjoy;
But with her person and her prudence blest,
His acts would prosper, and his soul have rest:
Would she be his?"—Why, that was much to say;
She would consider: he awhile might stay;
She liked his manners, and believed his word;
He did not flatter, flattery she abhorr'd:
It was her happy lot in peace to dwell—
Would change make better what was now so well?
But she would ponder."—"This," he said, "was kind
And begg'd to know "when she had fix'd her mind."
  Romantic maidens would have scorn'd the air
And the cool prudence of a mind so fair:
But well it pleased this wiser maid to find
Her own mild virtues in her lover's mind.
  His worldly wealth she sought, and quickly grew
Pleased with her search, and happy in the view
Of vessels freighted with abundant stores,
Of rooms whose treasures press'd the groaning floors;
And he of clerks and servants could display
A little army on a public day:
Was this a man like needy bard to speak
Of balmy lip, bright eye, or rosy cheek?
  The sum appointed for her widow'd state,
Fix'd by her friend, excited no debate;
Then the kind lady gave her hand and heart,
And, never finding, never dealt with art;
In his engagements she had no concern;
He taught her not, nor had she wish to learn:
On him in all occasions she relied,
His word her surety, and his worth her pride.
  When ship was launch'd, and merchant Paul had share
A bounteous feast became the lady's care:
Who then her entry to the dinner made,
In costly raiment, and with kind parade.
  Call'd by this duty on a certain day,
And robed to grace it in a rich array

forth from her room, with measured step she came,
Proud of th' event, and stately look'd the dame:
The husband met her at his study-door—
"This way, my love—one moment, and no more:
A trifling business—you will understand,
The law requires that you affix your hand;
But first attend, and you shall learn the cause,
Why forms like these have been prescribed by laws.
Then from his chair a man in black arose,
And with much quickness hurried off his prose:
That "Ellen Paul, the wife, and so forth, freed
From all control, her own the act and deed,
And forasmuch"——said she, "I've no distrust,
For he that asks it is discreet and just;
Our friends are waiting—where am I to sign?—
There!——Now be ready when we meet to dine."
This said, she hurried off in great delight,
The ship was launch'd, and joyful was the night.

Now, says the reader, and in much disdain,
This serious Merchant was a rogue in grain;
A treacherous wretch, an artful, sober knave,
And ten times worse for manners cool and grave.
And she devoid of sense, to set her hand
To scoundrel deeds, she could not understand.

Alas! 'tis true; and I in vain had tried
To soften crime, that cannot be denied;
And might have labour'd many a tedious verse
The latent cause of mischief to rehearse:
Be it confess'd, that long, with troubled look,
This Trader view'd a huge accompting-book;
(His former marriage for a time delay'd
The dreaded hour, the present lent its aid):
But he too clearly saw the evil day,
And put the terror, by deceit, away;
Thus by connecting with his sorrows, crime,
He gain'd a portion of uneasy time.—
All this too late the injured Lady saw,
What law had given, again she gave to law;
His guilt, her folly—these at once impress'd
Their lasting feelings on her guileless breast.

"Shame I can bear," she cried, "and want sustain,
But will not see this guilty wretch again:"
For all was lost, and he, with many a tear,
Confess'd the fault—she turning scorn'd to hear.
To legal claims he yielded all his worth.
But small the portion, and the wrong'd were wroth,
Nor to their debtor would a part allow;
And where to live he knew not—knew not how.

The Wife a cottage found, and thither went
The suppliant man, but she would not relent:
Thenceforth she utter'd with indignant tone,
"I feel the misery, and will feel alone:"—
He would turn servant for her sake, would keep
The poorest school; the very streets would sweep,
To show his love—"It was already shown:
And her affliction should be all her own:
His wants and weakness might have touch'd her heart,
But from his meanness she resolved to part."

In a small alley was she lodged, beside
Its humblest poor, and at the view she cried:
"Welcome—yes! let me welcome, if I can,
The fortune dealt me by this cruel man;
Welcome this low thatch'd roof, this shatter'd door,
These walls of clay, this miserable floor,
Welcome my envied neighbours; this, to you,
Is all familiar—all to me is new:
You have no hatred to the loathsome meal;
Your firmer nerves no trembling terrors feel,
Nor what you must expose, desire you to conceal
What your coarse feelings bear without offence,
Disgust: my taste, and poisons every sense:
Daily shall I your sad relations hear,
Of wanton women, and of men severe;
There will dire curses, dreadful oaths abound,
And vile expressions shock me and confound;
Noise of dull wheels, and songs with horrid words,
Will be the music that this lane affords;
Mirth that disgusts, and quarrels that degrade
The human mind, must my retreat invade:
Hard is my fate! yet easier to sustain,
Than to abide with guilt and fraud again;
A grave impostor? who expects to meet,
In such grey locks and gravity, deceit?
Where the sea rages, and the billows roar,
Men know the danger, and they quit the shore;
But, be there nothing in the way descried,
When o'er the rocks smooth runs the wicked tide—
Sinking unwarn'd, they execrate the shock,
And the dread peril of the sunken rock."

A frowning world had now the man to dread,
Taught in no arts, to no profession bred:
Pining in grief, beset with constant care,
Wandering he went, to rest he knew not where.

Meantime the Wife—but she abjured the name—
Endured her lot, and struggled with the shame,
When lo! an uncle on the mother's side,
In nature something, as in blood allied.

Admired her firmness, his protection gave,
And show'd a kindness she disdain'd to crave.
Frugal and rich the man, and frugal grew
The sister-mind, without a selfish view;
And further still—the temp'rate pair agreed
With what they saved the patient poor to feed:
His whole estate, when to the grave consign'd,
Left the good kinsman to the kindred mind;
Assured that law, with spell secure and tight,
Had fix'd it as her own peculiar right.
Now to her ancient residence removed,
She lived as widow, well endowed and loved;
Decent her table was, and to her door
Came daily welcomed the neglected poor:
The absent sick were soothed by her relief,
As her free bounty sought the haunts of grief
A plain and homely charity had she,
And loved the objects of her alms to see;
With her own hands she dress'd the savoury meat,
With her own fingers wrote the choice receipt;
She heard all tales that injured wives relate,
And took a double interest in their fate;
But of all husbands not a wretch was known
So vile, so mean, so cruel, as her own.
This bounteous Lady kept an active spy,
To search th' abodes of want, and to supply;
The gentle *Susan* served the liberal dame—
Unlike their notions, yet their deeds the same:
No practised villain could a victim find,
Than this stern Lady more completely blind;
Nor (if detected in his fraud) could meet
One less disposed to pardon a deceit;
The wrong she treasured, and on no pretence
Received th' offender, or forgot th' offence:
But the kind Servant, to the thrice-proved knave
A fourth time listen'd, and the past forgave.
First in her youth, when she was blithe and gay
Came a smooth rogue, and stole her love away;
Then to another and another flew,
To boast the wanton mischief he could do:
Yet she forgave him, though so great her pain,
That she was never blithe or gay again.
Then came a spoiler, who, with villain-art,
Implored her hand, and agonized her heart;
He seized her purse, in idle waste to spend
With a vile wanton, whom she call'd her friend;
Five years she suffer'd—he had revell'd five—
Then came to show her he was just alive:

Alone he came, his vile companion dead;
And he, a wand'ring pauper, wanting bread;
His body wasted, wither'd life and limb,
When this kind soul became a slave to him:
Nay, she was sure that, should he now survive
No better husband would be left alive;
For him she mourn'd and then, alone and poor,
Sought and found comfort at her Lady's door:
Ten years she served, and, mercy her employ,
Her tasks were pleasure, and her duty joy.

Thus lived the Mistress and the Maid, design'd
Each others aid—one cautious, and both kind:
Oft at their window, working, they would sigh
To see the aged and the sick go by;
Like wounded bees, that at their home arrive,
Slowly and weak, but labouring for the hive.

The busy people of a mason's yard
The curious Lady view'd with much regard;
With steady motion she perceived them draw
Through blocks of stone the slowly working saw:
It gave her pleasure and surprise to see
Among these men the signs of revelry:
Cold was the season, and confined their view,
Tedious their tasks, but merry were the crew:
There she beheld an aged pauper wait,
Patient and still, to take an humble freight;
Within the panniers on an ass he laid
The ponderous grit, and for the portion paid;
This he re-sold, and with each trifling gift,
Made shift to live, and wretched was the shift.

Nor will it be by every reader told
Who was this humble trader, poor and old.—
In vain an author would a name suppress,
From the least hint a reader learns to guess;
Of children lost, our novels sometimes treat,
We never care—assured again to meet:
In vain the writer for concealment tries,
We trace his purpose under all disguise;
Nay, though he tells us they are dead and gone,
Of whom we wot—they will appear anon;
Our favourites fight, are wounded, hopeless lie,
Survive they cannot—nay, they cannot die;
Now as these tricks and stratagems are known,
'Tis best, at once the simple truth to own.

This was the Husband—in a humble shed
He nightly slept, and daily sought his bread:
Once for relief the weary man applied:
"Your wife is rich," the angry vestry cried:

Alas! he dared not to his wife complain,
Feeling her wrongs, and fearing her disdain:
By various methods he had tried to live,
But not one effort would subsistence give:
He was an usher in a school, till noise
Made him less able than the weaker boys;
On messages he went, till he in vain
Strove names, or words, or meanings to retain;
Each small employment in each neighbouring town
By turn he took, to lay as quickly down:
For, such his fate, he fail'd in all he plann'd,
And nothing prosper'd in his luckless hand.

At his old home, his motive half suppress'd,
He sought no more for riches, but for rest:
There lived the beauteous Wife, and at her gate
He saw in cheerful groups the needy wait;
"Had he a right with bolder hope t' apply?"
He ask'd—was answer'd, and went groaning by;
For some remains of spirit, temper, pride,
Forbade a prayer he knew would be denied.

Thus was the grieving man, with burthen'd ass,
Seen day by day along the street to pass:
"Who is he, Susan? who the poor old man?
He never calls—do make him, if you can."—
The conscious damsel still delay'd to speak,
She stopp'd confused, and had her words to seek;
From Susan's fears the fact her mistress knew,
And cried—"The wretch! what scheme has he in view!
Is this his lot?—but let him, let him feel—
Who wants the courage, not the will to steal."

A dreadful winter came, each day severe,
Misty when mild, and icy cold when clear;
And still the humble dealer took his load,
Returning slow, and shivering on the road:
The Lady, still relentless, saw him come,
And said—"I wonder, has the wretch a home?"—
"A hut! a hovel!"—"Then his fate appears
To suit his crime:"—"Yes, lady, not his years;—
No! nor his sufferings—nor that form decay'd."—
"Well! let the parish give its paupers aid:
You must the vileness of his acts allow"
"And you, dear lady, that he feels it now."—
"When such dissemblers on their deeds reflect,
Can they the pity they refused expect?
He that doth evil, evil shall he dread."—
"The snow," quoth Susan, "falls upon his bed—
It blows beside the thatch—it melts upon his head."—
"'Tis weakness, child, for grieving guilt to feel:"—
"Yes, but he never sees a wholesome meal;

Through his bare dress appears his shrivell'd skin,
And ill he fares without, and worse within:
With that weak body, lame, diseased, and slow,
What cold, pain, peril, must the sufferer know!"—
"Think on his crime."—"Yes, sure t was very wrong;
But look, (God bless him!) how he gropes along."—
"Brought me to shame."—"Oh! yes, I know it all—
What cutting blast! and he can scarcely crawl;
He freezes as he moves—he dies! if he should fall
With cruel fierceness drives this icy sleet—
And must a Christian perish in the street,
In sight of Christians?—There! at last, he lies;—
Nor unsupported can he ever rise:
He cannot live."—"But is he fit to die?"—
Here Susan softly mutter'd a reply,
Look'd round the room—said something of its state,
Dives the rich, and Lazarus at his gate;
And then aloud—"In pity do behold
The man affrighten'd, weeping trembling, cold:
Oh! how those flakes of snow their entrance win
Through the poor rags, and keep the frost within;
His very heart seems frozen as he goes,
Leading that starved companion of his woes:
He tried to pray—his lips, I saw them move,
And he so turn'd his piteous looks above;
But the fierce wind the willing heart opposed,
And, ere he spoke, the lips in misery closed:
Poor suffering object! yes, for ease you pray'd,
And God will hear—he only, I'm afraid."
"Peace! Susan, peace! pain ever follows sin."—
'Ah! then," thought Susan, "when will ours begin;
When reach'd his home, to what a cheerless fire
And chilling bed will those cold limbs retire!
Yet ragged, wretched as it is, that bed
Takes half the space of his contracted shed;
I saw the thorns beside the narrow grate,
With straws collected in a putrid state:
There will he, kneeling, strive the fire to raise,
And that will warm him, rather than the blaze:
The sullen, smoky blaze, that cannot last
One moment after his attempt is past:
And I so warmly and so purely laid
To sink to rest—indeed I am afraid."—
"Know you his conduct?"—"Yes indeed I know—
And how he wanders in the wind and snow:
Safe in our rooms the threatening storm we hear,
But he feels strongly what we faintly fear.'
"Wilful was rich, and he the storm defied;
Wilful is poor, and must the storm abide;"

Said the stern Lady—" 'Tis in vain we feel
Go and prepare the chicken for our meal."
Susan her task reluctantly began,
And utter'd as she went—" The poor old man!"—
But while her soft and ever-yielding heart
Made strong pretest against her lady's part,
The lady's self' began to think it wrong
Te feel so wrathful, and resent so long.
" No more the wretch would she receive again,
No more behold him—but she would sustain;
Great his offence, and evil was his mind—
But he had suffer'd, and she would be kind:
She spurn d such baseness, and she found within
A fair acquittal from so foul a sin;
Yet she too err'd, and must of Heaven expect
To be rejected, him should she reject. '
Susan was summon'd—" I m about to do
A foolish act, in part seduced by you;
Go to the creature—say that I intend,
Foe to his sins, to be his sorrow's friend;
Take for his present comforts, food and wine,
And mark his feelings at this act of mine:
Observe if shame be o'er his features spread
By his own victim to be soothed and fed;
But, this inform him, that it is not love
That prompts my heart, that duties only move:
Say that no merits in his favour plead,
But miseries only, and his abject need;
Nor bring me grov'ling thanks, nor high-flown praise
I would his spirits, not his fancy raise:
Give him no hope that I shall ever more
A man so vile to my esteem restore;
But warn him rather, that, in time of rest,
His crimes be all remember'd and confess'd:
I know not all that form the sinner's debt,
But there is one that he must not forget."
The mind of Susan prompted her with speed
To act her part in every courteous deed:
All that was kind she was prepared to say,
And keep the lecture for a future day;
When he had all life's comforts by his side,
Pity might sleep, and good advice be tried.
This done, the mistress felt disposed to look
As self-approving, on a pious book:
Yet, to her native bias still inclined,
She felt her act too merciful and kind;
But when, long musing on the chilling scene
So lately past—the frost and sleet so keen—

The man's whole misery in a single view—
Yes! she could think some pity was his due.
Thus fix'd, she heard not her attendant glide
With soft slow step—till, standing by her side,
The trembling servant gasp'd for breath, and shed
Relieving tears, then utter'd—"He is dead!"
"Dead!" said the startled Lady. "Yes, he fell
Close at the door where he was wont to dwell;
There his sole friend, the Ass, was standing by,
Half dead himself to see his Master die."
"Expired he then, good Heaven! for want of food?
No! crusts and water in a corner stood;—
To have this plenty, and to wait so long,
And to be right too late, is doubly wrong:
Then, every day to see him totter by,
And to forbear—Oh! what a heart had I!"
"Blame me not, child: I tremble at the news."
"'Tis my own heart," said Susan, "I accuse:
To have this money in my purse—to know
What grief was his, and what to grief we owe;
To see him often, always to conceive
How he must pine and languish, groan and grieve
And every day in ease and peace to dine,
And rest in comfort!—what a heart is mine!"

TALE XVIII.

THE WAGER.

'Tis thought your deer doth hold you at a bay

——I choose her for myself;
If she and I are pleased, what's that to you?

——Let's send each one to his wife,
And he whose wife is most obedient
Shall win the wager.

——Now by the world it is a lusty wench,
I love her ten times more than e'er I did.
Taming of the Shrew

Courter and *Clubb* were men in trade, whose pains,
Credit, and prudence, brought them constant gains;
Partners and punctual, every friend agreed
Counter and Clubb were men who must succeed.
When they had fix'd some little time in life,
Each thought of taking to himself a wife:
As men in trade alike, as men in love,
They seem'd with no according views to move;
As certain ores in outward view the same,
They show'd their difference when the magnet came.
Counter was vain: with spirit strong and high,
'Twas not in him like suppliant swain to sigh:
"His wife might o'er his men and maids preside,
And in her province be a judge and guide;
But what he thought, or did, or wish'd to do,
She must not know, or censure if she knew;
At home, abroad, by day, by night, if he
On aught determined, so it was to be:
"How is a man," he ask'd "for business fit,
Who to a female can his will submit?
Absent awhile, let no enquiring eye
Or plainer speech presume to question why:

But all be silent; and, when seen again,
Let all be cheerful—shall a wife complain?
Friends I invite, and who shall dare t' ob'ject,
Or look on them with coolness or neglect?
No! I must ever of my house be head,
And, thus obey'd, I condescend to wed."

Clubb heard the speech—"My friend is nice," said he
"A wife with less respect will do for me:
How is he certain such a prize to gain?
What he approves, a lass may learn to feign,
And so affect t' obey till she begins to reign;
Awhile complying, she may vary then,
And be as wives of more unwary men;
Beside, to him who plays such lordly part,
How shall a tender creature yield her heart?
Should he the promised confidence refuse,
She may another more confiding choose;
May show her anger, yet her purpose hide,
And wake his jealousy, and wound his pride.
In one so humbled, who can trace the friend?
I on an equal, not a slave, depend;
If true, my confidence is wisely placed,
And being false, she only is disgraced."
Clubb, with these notions, cast his eye around,
And one so easy soon a partner found.
The lady chosen was of good repute;
Meekness she had not, and was seldom mute;
Though quick to anger, still she loved to smile;
And would be calm if men would wait awhile:
She knew her duty, and she loved her way,
More pleased in truth to govern than obey;
She heard her priest with reverence, and her spouse
As one who felt the pressure of her vows;
Useful and civil, all her friends confess'd—
Give her her way, and she would choose the best;
Though some indeed a sly remark would make—
Give it her not, and she would choose to take.

All this, when Clubb some cheerful months had spent
He saw, confess'd, and said he was content.

Counter meantime selected, doubted, weigh'd,
And then brought home a young complying maid;
A tender creature, full of fears as charms,
A beauteous nursling from its mother's arms;
A soft, sweet blossom, such as men must love,
But to preserve must keep it in the stove:
She had a mild, subdued, expiring look—
Raise but the voice, and this fair creature shook,
Leave her alone, she felt a thousand fears—
Chide, and she melted into floods of tears;

Fondly she pleaded and would gently sigh,
For very pity, or she knew not why;
One whom to govern none could be afraid—
Hold up the finger, this meek thing obey'd;
Her happy husband had the easiest task—
Say but his will, no question would she ask;
She sought no reasons, no affairs she knew,
Of business spoke not, and had nought to do.
Oft he exclaim'd, "How meek! how mild! how kind
With her 'twere cruel but to seem unkind;
Though ever silent when I take my leave,
It pains my heart to think how hers will grieve;
'Tis heaven on earth with such a wife to dwell.
I am in raptures to have sped so well;
But let me not, my friend, your envy raise,
No! on my life, your patience has my praise."
His Friend, though silent, felt the scorn implied—
"What need of patience?" to himself he cried:
'Better a woman o'er her house to rule,
Than a poor child just hurried from her school;
Who has no care, yet never lives at ease;
Unfit to rule, and indisposed to please;
What if he govern, there his boast should end,
No husband's power can make a slave his friend."
It was the custom of these Friends to meet
With a few neighbours in a neighbouring street;
Where Counter ofttimes would occasion seize,
To move his silent friend by words like these:
"A man," said he, "if govern'd by his wife,
Gives up his rank and dignity in life;
Now, better fate befalls my Friend and me"—
He spoke, and look'd the approving smile to see.
The quiet partner, when he chose to speak,
Desired his friend, "another theme to seek;
When thus they met, he judged that state-affairs
And such important subjects should be theirs:"
But still the partner, in his lighter vein,
Would cause in Clubb affliction or disdain;
It made him anxious to detect the cause
Of all that boasting—"Wants my friend applause?
This plainly proves him not at perfect ease,
For, felt he pleasure, he would wish to please.—
These triumphs here for some regrets atone—
Men who are blest let other men alone."
Thus made suspicious, he observed and saw
His friend each night at early hour withdraw:
He sometimes mention'd Juliet's tender nerves
And what attention such a wife deserves:

'In this," thought Clubb, "full sure some mystery lies—
He laughs at me yet he with much complies,
And all his vaunts of bliss are proud apologies."
With such ideas treasured in his breast,
He grew composed, and let his anger rest,
Till Counter once (when wine so long went round,
That friendship and discretion both were drown'd)
Began, in teasing and triumphant mood,
His evening banter—"Of all earthly good,
The best," he said, "was an obedient spouse,
Such as my friend's—that every one allows:
What if she wishes his designs to know?
It is because she would her praise bestow;
What if she wills that he remain at home?
She knows that mischief may from travel come.
I, who am free to venture where I please,
Have no such kind preventing checks as these;
But mine is double duty, first to guide
Myself aright, then rule a house beside;
While this our friend, more happy than the free,
Resigns all power, and laughs at liberty."
"By Heaven," said Clubb, "excuse me if I swear,
I'll bet a hundred guineas, if he dare,
That uncontroll'd I will such freedoms take,
That he will fear to equal—there's my stake."
"A match!" said Counter, much by wine inflamed
"But we are friends—let smaller stake be named:
Wine for our future meeting, that will I
Take and no more—what peril shall we try?"
"Let's to Newmarket," Clubb replied: "or choose
Yourself the place, and what you like to lose;
And he who first returns, or fears to go,
Forfeits his cash—" Said Counter, "Be it so."
The friends around them saw with much delight
The social war, and hail'd the pleasant night;
Nor would they further hear the cause discuss'd,
Afraid the recreant heart of Clubb to trust.
Now sober thoughts return'd as each withdrew,
And of the subject took a serious view: [love;"
"'Twas wrong," thought Counter, "and will grieve my
"'Twas wrong," thought Clubb, "my wife will not approve,
But friends were present; I must try the thing,
Or with my folly half the town will ring."
He sought his lady—"Madam, I'm to blame,
But was reproach'd, and could not bear the shame;
Here in my folly—for 'tis best to say
The very truth—I've sworn to leave my way;
To that Newmarket—(though I hate the place,
And have no taste or talents for a race,

Yet so it is—well. now prepare to chide—)
I laid a wager that I dared to ride;
And I must go: by Heaven, if you resist
I shall be scorn'd, and ridiculed, and hiss'd;
Let me with grace before my friends appear,
You know the truth, and must not be severe:
He too must go, but that he will of course;
Do you consent?—I never think of force."
"You never need," the worthy Dame replied,
"The husband's honour is the woman's pride
If I in trifles be the wilful wife,
Still for your credit I would lose my life;
Go! and when fix'd the day of your return,
Stay longer yet, and let the blockheads learn,
That though a wife may sometimes wish to rule,
She would not make th' indulgent man a fool;
I would at times advise—but idle they
Who think th' assenting husband *must* obey."
The happy man, who thought his lady right
In other cases, was assured to-night;
Then for the day with proud delight prepared,
To show his doubting friends how much he dared.
Counter—who grieving sought his bed, his rest
Broken by pictures of his love distress'd—
With soft and winning speech the fair prepar
"She all his councils, comforts, pleasures shared·
She was assured he loved her from his soul,
She never knew and need not fear control;
But so it happen'd—he was grieved at heart,
It happen d so, that they awhile must part—
A little time—the distance was but short,
And business call d him—he despised the sport;
But to Newmarket he engaged to ride,
With his friend Clubb," and there he stopp'd and sigh'd
Awhile the tender creature look'd dismay'd,
Then floods of tears the call of grief obey'd:—
"She an objection! No!" she sobb'd, "not one;
Her work was finish'd, and her race was run;
For die she must, indeed, she would not live
A week alone, for all the world could give;
He too must die in that same wicked place;
It always happen d—was a common case;
Among those horrid horses, jockeys, crowds,
'Twas certain death—they might bespeak their shrouds
He would attempt a race, be sure to fall—
And she expire with terror—that was all;
With love like hers she was indeed unfit
To bear such horrors, but she must submit."

"But for three days, my love! three days at most—"
"Enough for me; I then shall be a ghost—"
"My honour's pledged."—"Oh! yes, my dearest life,
I know your honour must outweigh your wife:
But ere this absence, have you sought a friend?
I shall be dead—on whom can you depend?
Let me one favour of your kindness crave,
Grant me the stone I mentioned for my grave."—
"Nay, love, attend—why, bless my soul—I say
I will return—there—weep no longer—nay!—"
"Well! I obey, and to the last am true,
But spirits fail me; I must die; adieu!" [zounds!
"What, Madam! must?—'tis wrong—I'm angry—
Can I remain and lose a thousand pounds?"
"Go then, my love! it is a monstrous sum,
Worth twenty wives—go, love! and I am dumb—
Nor be displeased—had I the power to live,
You might be angry, now you must forgive;
Alas! I faint—ah! cruel—there's no need
Of wounds or fevers—this has done the deed."
The lady fainted, and the husband sent
For every aid, for every comfort went;
Strong terror seized him: "Oh! she loved so well
'And who th effect of tenderness could tell?"
She now recover'd, and again began
With accent querulous—"Ah! cruel man—"
Till the sad husband, conscience-struck, confess'd,
'Twas very wicked with his Friend to jest;
For now he saw that those who were obeyed,
Could like the most subservient feel afraid;
And though a wife might not dispute the will
Of her liege lord, she could prevent it still.
The morning came, and Clubb prepared to ride
With a smart boy, his servant and his guide;
When, ere he mounted on the ready steed,
Arrived a letter, and he stopp'd to read.
"My friend," he read—"our journey I decline,
A heart too tender for such strife is mine;
Yours is the triumph, be you so inclined;
But you are too considerate and kind:
In tender pity to my Juliet's fears
I thus relent, o ercome by love and tears;
She knows your kindness; I have heard her say
A man like you 'tis pleasure to obey:
Each faithful wife, like ours, must disapprove
Such dangerous trifling with connubial love;
What has the idle world, my friend, to do
With our affairs? they envy me and you:

What if I could my gentle spouse command—
Is that a cause I should her tears withstand?
And what if you, a friend of peace, submit
To one you love—is that a theme for wit?
'Twas wrong and I shall henceforth judge it weak
Both of submission and control to speak:
Be it agreed that all contention cease,
And no such follies vex our future peace;
Let each keep guard against domestic strife,
And find nor slave nor tyrant in his wife."

"Agreed,' said Clubb, "with all my soul agreed"—
And to the boy, delighted, gave his steed:
"I think my friend has well his mind express'd
And I assent: such things are not a jest."

"True," said the Wife, "no longer he can hide
The truth that pains him by his wounded pride;
Your Friend has found it not an easy thing,
Beneath his yoke this yielding soul to bring;
These weeping willows, though they seem inclined
By every breeze, yet not the strongest wind
Can from their bent divert this weak but stubborn kind
Drooping they seek your pity to excite,
But tis at once their nature and delight,
Such women feel not: while they sigh and weep,
'Tis but their habit—their affections sleep:
They are like ice that in the hand we hold,
So very melting, yet so very cold;
On such affection let not man rely,
The husbands suffer, and the ladies sigh:
But your friend's offer let us kindly take,
And spare his pride for his vexation's sake.
For he has found, and through his life will find,
'Tis easiest dealing with the firmest mind—
More just when it resists, and, when it yields more kind.'

TALE XIX.

THE CONVERT.

——I myself, sometimes leaving the fear of Heaven on the left hand, and hiding mine honour in my necessity, am forced to shuffle, to hedge, and to lurch.—*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

——— Yea, and at that very moment,
Consideration like an angel came,
And whipp'd th' offending Adam out of him.—*Henry V*

Some to our Hero have a hero's name
Denied, because no father's he could claim;
Nor could his mother with precision state
A full fair claim to her certificate:
On her own word the marriage must depend—
A point she was not eager to defend:
But who, without a father's name, can raise
His own so high, deserves the greater praise:
The less advantage to the strife he brought,
The greater wonders has his prowess wrought;
He who depends upon his wind and limbs,
Needs neither cork or bladder when he swims;
Nor will by empty breath be puff'd along,
As not himself—but in his helpers—strong.
Suffice it then, our Hero's name was clear,
For, call *John Dighton*, and he answer'd "Here!"
But who that name in early life assign'd
He never found, he never tried to find;
Whether his kindred were to John disgrace,
Or John to them, is a disputed case:
His infant-state owed nothing to their care—
His mind neglected, and his body bare:
All his success must on himself depend,
He had no money, counsel, guide, or friend;
But in a market-town an active boy
Appear'd, and sought in various ways employ;
Who soon, thus cast upon the world, began
To show the talents of a thriving man.

With spirit high John learn'd the world to brave,
And in both senses was a ready knave:
Knave as of old, obedient, keen, and quick,
Knave as at present, skill'd to shift and trick;
Some humble part of many trades he caught,
He for the builder and the painter wrought;
For serving-maids on secret errands ran,
The waiter's helper, and the ostler's man;
And when he chanced (oft chanced he) place to lose
His varying genius shone in blacking shoes:
A midnight fisher by the pond he stood,
Assistant poacher, he o'erlook'd the wood;
At an election John's impartial mind
Was to no cause nor candidate confined;
To all in turn he full allegiance swore,
And in his hat the various badges bore:
His liberal soul with every sect agreed,
Unheard their reasons, he received their creed;
At church he deign'd the organ-pipes to fill,
And at the meeting sang both loud and shrill.
But the full purse these different merits gain'd,
By strong demands his lively passions drain'd;
Liquors he loved of each inflaming kind,
To midnight revels flew with ardent mind;
Too warm at cards, a losing game he play'd,
To fleecing beauty his attention paid:
His boiling passions were by oaths express'd,
And lies he made his profit and his jest.

Such was the boy, and such the man had been,
But fate or happier fortune changed the scene;
A fever seized him, "He should surely die—"
He fear'd, and lo! a friend was praying by;
With terror moved, this Teacher he address'd,
And all the errors of his youth confess'd:
The good man kindly clear'd the Sinner's way
To lively hope, and counsell'd him to pray:
Who then resolved, should he from sickness rise,
To quit cards, liquors, poaching, oaths, and lies:
His health restored, he yet resolved, and grew
True to his masters, to their Meeting true;
His old companions at his sober face
Laugh'd loud, while he, attesting it was grace,
With tears besought them all his calling to embrace:
To his new friends such Convert gave applause,
Life to their zeal, and glory to their cause:
Though terror wrought the mighty change, yet strong
Was the impression, and it lasted long;
John at the lectures due attendance paid,
A convert meek, obedient, and afraid.

His manners strict, though form'd on fear alone,
Pleased the grave friends, nor less his solemn tone,
The lengthen d face of care, the low and inward groan
The stern good men exulted, when they saw
Those timid looks of penitence and awe;
Nor thought that one so passive, humble, meek,
Had yet a creed and principles to seek

The Faith that Reason finds, confirms, avows
The hopes, the views, the comforts she allows—
These were not his, who by his feelings found,
And by them only, that his faith was sound;
Feelings of terror these, for evil past,
Feelings of hope, to be received at last;
Now weak, now lively, changing with the day,
These were his feelings, and he felt his way.

Sprung from such sources, will this faith remain
While these supporters can their strength retain:
As heaviest weights the deepest rivers pass,
While icy chains fast bind the solid mass;
So, born of feelings, faith remains secure,
Long as their firmness and their strength endure:
But when the waters in their channel glide,
A bridge must bear us o'er the threat'ning tide;
Such bridge is Reason, and there Faith relies.
Whether the varying spirits fall or rise.

His patrons, still disposed their aid to lend,
Behind a counter placed their humble friend;
Where pens and paper were on shelves display'd,
And pious pamphlets on the windows laid:
By nature active, and from vice restrain'd,
Increasing trade his bolder views sustain'd;
His friends and teachers, finding so much zeal
In that young convert whom they taught to feel,
His trade encouraged, and were pleased to find
A hand so ready, with such humble mind.

And now, his health restored, his spirits eased,
He wish'd to marry, if the teachers pleased.
They, not unwilling, from the virgin-class,
Took him a comely and a courteous lass;
Simple and civil, loving, and beloved,
She long a fond and faithful partner proved;
In every year the elders and the priest
Were duly summon'd to a christening feast;
Nor came a babe, but by his growing trade,
John had provision for the coming made;
For friends and strangers all were pleased to deal
With one whose care was equal to his zeal.

In human friendships, it compels a sigh,
To think what trifles will dissolve the tie.

John, now become a master of his trade,
Perceived how much improvement might be made,
And as this prospect open'd to his view,
A certain portion of his zeal withdrew:
His fear abated—"What had he to fear—
His profits certain, and his conscience clear?"
Above his door a board was placed by John,
And "Dighton, Stationer," was gilt thereon;
His window next, enlarged to twice the size,
Shone with such trinkets as the simple prize;
While in the shop with pious works were seen
The last new play, review, or magazine:
In orders punctual, he observed—"The books
He never read, and could he judge their looks?
Readers and critics should their merits try,
He had no office but to sell and buy;
Like other traders, profit was his care:
Of what they print, the authors must beware."
He held his patrons and his teachers dear,
But with his trade—they must not interfere.

'T was certain now that John had lost the dread
And pious thoughts that once such terrors bred;
His habits varied, and he more inclined
To the vain world, which he had half-resign'd:
He had moreover in his brethren seen,
Or he imagined, craft, conceit, and spleen;
"They are but men," said John, "and shall I then
Fear man's control, or stand in awe of men?
'T is their advice (their Convert's rule and law,)
And good it is—I will not stand in awe."

Moreover Dighton, though he thought of books
As one who chiefly on the title looks,
Yet sometimes ponder'd o'er a page to find,
When vex'd with cares, amusement for his mind
And by degrees that mind had treasured much
From works his teachers were afraid to touch:
Satiric novels, poets bold and free,
And what their writers term philosophy;
All these were read, and he began to feel
Some self-approval on his bosom steal.
Wisdom creates humility, but he
Who thus collects it, will not humble be:
No longer John was fill'd with pure delight
And humble reverence in a pastor's sight;
Who, like a grateful zealot, listening stood,
To hear a man so friendly and so good;
But felt the dignity of one who made
Himself important by a thriving trade;

And growing pride in Dighton's mind was bred
By the strange food on which it coarsely fed.
Their brother's fall the grieving Brethren heard—
His pride indeed to all around appear'd;
The world, his friends agreed, had won the soul
From its best hopes, the man from their control.
To make him humble, and confine his views
Within their bounds, and books which they peruse,
A deputation from these friends select,
Might reason with him to some good effect;
Arm'd with authority, and led by love,
They might those follies from his mind remove:
Deciding thus, and with this kind intent,
A chosen body with its speaker went.
"John," said the Teacher, "John," with great concern
"We see thy frailty, and thy fate discern—
Satan with toils thy simple soul beset,
And thou art careless, slumbering in the net;
Unmindful art thou of thy early vow;
Who at the morning-meeting sees thee now?
Who at the evening? where is brother John?
We ask—are answer'd, To the tavern gone;
Thee on the sabbath seldom we behold;
Thou canst not sing, thou'rt nursing for a cold:
This from the churchmen thou hast learn'd, for they
Have colds and fevers on the sabbath-day;
When in some snug warm room, they sit, and pen
Bills from their ledgers—world-entangled men!
"See with what pride thou hast enlarged thy shop;
To view thy tempting stores the heedless stop:
By what strange names dost thou these baubles know,
Which wantons wear, to make a sinful show?
Hast thou in view these idle volumes placed
To be the pander of a vicious taste?
What's here! a book of dances!—you advance
In goodly knowledge—John, wilt learn to dance?
How! '*Go*—' it says, and '*to the devil go!*
And shake thyself!' I tremble—but 't is so——
Wretch as thou art, what answer canst thou make?
Oh! without question, *thou* wilt go and shake.
What's here? the 'School for Scandal'—pretty schools!
Well, and art thou proficient in the rules?
Art thou a pupil, is it thy design
To make our names contemptible as thine?
Old Nick, a novel!' oh! 't is mighty well—
A fool has courage when he laughs at hell;
Frolic and Fun,' the 'Humours of Tim Grin;
Why, John, thou grow'st facetious in thy sin;

And what?—*'the Archdeacon's Charge!'*—'tis mighty well—
If Satan publish'd, thou would'st doubtless sell;
Jests, novels, dances, and this precious stuff
To crown thy folly—we have seen enough;
We find thee fitted for each evil work:
Do print the Koran, and become a Turk.
"John, thou art lost; success and worldly pride
O'er all thy thoughts and purposes preside.
Love bound thee fast, and drawn thee far aside:
Yet turn; these sin-traps from thy shop expel,
Repent and pray, and all may yet be well.
"And here thy wife, thy Dorothy, behold,
How fashion's wanton robes her form infold!
Can grace, can goodness with such trappings dwell?
John, thou hast made thy wife a Jezebel:
See! on her bosom rests the sign of sin,
The glaring proof of naughty thoughts within:
What! 'tis a cross; come hither—as a friend,
Thus from thy neck the shameful badge I rend."
"Rend, if you dare" said Dighton: "you shall find
A man of spirit, though to peace inclined:
Call me ungrateful! have I not my pay
At all times ready for the expected day?—
To share my plenteous board you deign to come,
Myself your pupil, and my house your home;
And shall the persons who my meat enjoy
Talk of my faults, and treat me as a boy?
Have you not told how Rome's insulting priests
Led their meek laymen like a herd of beasts;
And by their fleecing and their forgery made
Their holy calling an accursed trade?
Can you such acts and insolence condemn,
Who to your utmost power resemble them?
"Concerns it you what books I set for sale?
The tale perchance may be a virtuous tale;
And for the rest 't is neither wise nor just,
In you, who read not, to condemn on trust:
Why should the Archdeacon's Charge your spleen excite?
He, or perchance th' Archbishop, may be right
"That from your meetings I refrain, is true:
I meet with nothing pleasant—nothing new,
But the same proofs, that not one text explain,
And the same lights, were all things dark remain
I thought you saints on earth—but I have found
Some sins among you, and the best unsound.
You have your failings, like the crowds below,
And at your pleasure hot and cold can blow;

When I at first your grave deportment saw,
(I own my folly), I was fill'd with awe;
You spoke so warmly, and it seemed so well,
I should have thought it treason to rebel;
Is it a wonder that a man like me
Should such perfection in such teachers see;
Nay, should conceive you sent from Heav'n to brave
The host of sin, and sinful souls to save?
But as our reason wakes, our prospects clear
And failings, flaws, and blemishes appear.

"When you were mounted in your rostrum high,
We shrank beneath your tone, your frown, your eye;
Then you beheld us abject, fallen, low,
And felt your glory from our baseness grow;
Touch'd by your words, I trembled like the rest,
And my own vileness and your power confess'd:
These, I exclaim'd, are men divine, and gazed
On him who taught, delighted, and amazed;
Glad when he finish'd, if by chance he cast
One look on such a sinner, as he pass'd.

"But when I view'd you in a clearer light,
And saw the frail and carnal appetite;
When, at his humble pray'r, you deign'd to eat,
Saints as you are, a civil sinner's meat;
When as you sat contented and at ease,
Nibbling at leisure on the ducks and peas,
And, pleased some comforts in such place to find,
You could descend to be a little kind;
And gave us hope, in heaven there might be room
For a few souls besides your own to come;
While this world's good engaged your carnal view,
And like a sinner you enjoy'd it too;
All this perceiving, can you think it strange
That change in you should work an equal change?"

"Wretch that thou art," an elder cried, "and gone
For everlasting."——"Go thyself," said John;
"Depart this instant, let me hear no more;
My house my castle is, and that my door."

The hint they took, and from the door withdrew,
And John to meeting bade a long adieu;
Attach'd to business, he in time became
A wealthy man of no inferior name.
It seem'd, alas! in John's deluded sight,
That all was wrong because not all was right,
And when he found his teachers had their stains
Resentment and not reason broke his chains:
Thus on his feelings he again relied,
And never look'd to reason for his guide:

Could he have wisely view'd the frailty shown,
And rightly weigh'd their wanderings and his own,
He might have known that men may be sincere.
Though gay, and feasting on the savoury cheer;
That doctrines sound and sober they may teach,
Who love to eat with all the glee they preach;
Nay! who believe the duck, the grape, the pine,
Were not intended for the dog and swine:
But Dighton's hasty mind on every theme
Ran from the truth, and rested in th' extreme:
Flaws in his friends he found, and then withdrew
(Vain of his knowledge) from their virtues too.
Best of his books he loved the liberal kind,
That, if they improve not, still enlarge the mind;
And found himself, with such advisers, free
From a fix'd creed, as mind enlarged could be.
His humble wife at these opinions sigh'd
But her he never heeded till she died;
He then assented to a last request,
And by the meeting-window let her rest:
And on her stone the sacred text was seen
Which had her comfort in departing been

Dighton with joy beheld his trade advance,
Yet seldom publish'd, loth to trust to chance:
Then wed a doctor's sister—poor indeed,
But skill'd in works her husband could not read;
Who, if he wish'd new ways of wealth to seek,
Could make her half-crown pamphlet in a week:
This he rejected, though without disdain,
And chose the old and certain way to gain.

Thus he proceeded: trade increased the while,
And fortune woo'd him with perpetual smile:
On early scenes he sometimes cast a thought,
When on his heart the mighty change was wrought;
And all the ease and comfort Converts find
Was magnified in his reflecting mind:
Then on the teacher's priestly pride he dwelt,
That caused his freedom, but with this he felt
The danger of the free—for since that day
No guide had shown, no brethren join'd his way,
Forsaking one, he found no second creed,
But reading doubted, doubting what to read.

Still, though reproof had brought some present pain,
The gain he made was fair and honest gain;
He laid his wares indeed in public view,
But that all traders claim a right to do:
By means like these, he saw his wealth increase,
And felt his consequence, and dwelt in peace.

Our Hero's age was threescore years and five,
When he exclaim'd, "Why longer should I strive?
Why more amass, who never must behold
A young John Dighton to make glad the old?"
(The sons he had, to early graves were gone,
And girls were burdens to the mind of John.)
"Had I a boy, he would our name sustain,
That now to nothing must return again;
But what are all my profits, credit, trade,
And parish-honours?—folly and parade."

Thus Dighton thought, and in his looks appear'd
Sadness, increased by much he saw and heard:
The Brethren often at the shop would stay,
And make their comments ere they walk'd away:
They mark'd the window, fill'd in every pane
With lawless prints of reputations slain:
Distorted forms of men with honours graced,
And our chief rulers in derision placed:
Amazed they stood, remembering well the days,
When to be humble was their brother's praise;
When at the dwelling of their friend they stopp'd
To drop a word, or to receive it dropp'd;
Where they beheld the prints of men renown'd,
And far-famed preachers pasted all around;
Such mouths! eyes! hair! so prim! so fierce! so sleek
They look'd as speaking what is woe to speak):
On these the passing brethren lov'd to dwell!—
How long they spake! how strongly! warmly! well!
What power had each to dive in mysteries deep,
To warm the cold, to make the harden'd weep;
To lure, to fright, to soothe, to awe the soul,
And list'ning flocks to lead and to control!

But now discoursing, as they linger'd near,
They tempted John (whom they accused) to hear
Their weighty charge—"And can the lost-one feel
As in the time of duty, love, and zeal:
When all were summon'd at the rising sun,
And he was ready with his friends to run;
When, he, partaking with a chosen few,
Felt the great change sensation rich and new?
No! all is lost, her favour Fortune shower'd
Upon the man, and he is overpower'd:
The world has won him with its tempting store
Of needless wealth, and that has made him poor:
Success undoes him; he has risen to fall,
Has gain'd a fortune, and has lost his all;
Gone back from Sion, he will find his age
Loth to commence a second pilgrimage;

He has retreated from the chosen track;
And now must ever bear the burden on his back.'
Hurt by such censure, John began to find
Fresh revolutions working in his mind;
He sought for comfort in his books, but read
Without a plan or method in his head;
What once amused, now rather made him sad;
What should inform, increased the doubts he had;
Shame would not let him seek at Church a guide,
And from his Meeting he was held by pride,
His wife derided fears she never felt,
And passing brethren daily censures dealt;
Hope for a son was now for ever past,
He was the first John Dighton and the last;
His stomach fail d, his case the doctor knew,
But said, "he still might hold a year or two:"
"No more!" he said, "but why should I complain
A life of doubt must be a life of pain:
Could I be sure—but why should I despair?
I'm sure my conduct has been just and fair;
In youth, indeed, I had a wicked will,
But I repented, and have sorrow still:
I had my comforts, and a growing trade
Gave greater pleasure than a fortune made;
And as I more possess'd and reason'd more,
I lost those comforts I enjoy'd before,
When reverend guides I saw my table round,
And in my guardian guest my safety found:
Now sick and sad, no appetite, no ease,
Nor pleasures have I, nor a wish to please;
Nor views, nor hopes, nor plans, nor taste have I,
Yet sick of life, have no desire to die."
He said and died: his trade, his name is gone,
And all that once gave consequence to John.
Unhappy Dighton! had he found a friend,
When conscience told him it was time to mend;
A friend discreet, considerate, kind, sincere,
Who would have shown the grounds of hope and fear
And proved that spirits, whether high or low,
No certain tokens of man's safety show;
Had reason ruled him in her proper place,
And Virtue led him while he lean'd on grace;
Had he while zealous been discreet and pure,
His knowledge humble, and his hope secure;—
These guides had placed him on the solid rock,
Where Faith had rested, nor received a shock;
But his, alas! was placed upon the sand,
Where long it stood not, and where none can stand.

TALE XX.

THE BROTHERS.

—— A brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms,
That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty
My practice may ride easy.—*Lear.*

—— He lets me feed with hinds,
Bears me the place of brother.—*As You Like it.*

—— 'T was I, but 't is not I: I do not shame
To tell you what I was, being what I am.—*As You Like it.*

'Twas old *George Fletcher*, on the British coast,
Dwelt not a seaman who had more to boast:
Kind, simple, and sincere—he seldom spoke,
But sometimes sang and chorus'd—"Hearts of oak!"
In dangers steady, with his lot content,
His days in labour and in love were spent.
He left a Son so like him, that the old
With joy exclaim'd, "'Tis Fletcher we behold;"
But to his Brother when the kinsmen came,
And view'd his form, they grudged the father's name
George was a bold, intrepid, careless lad,
With just the failings that his father had;
Isaac was weak, attentive, slow, exact,
With just the virtues that his father lack'd.
George lived at sea: upon the land a guest—
He sought for recreation, not for rest—
While, far unlike, his brother's feebler form
Shrank from the cold, and shudder'd at the storm;
Still with the Seamen's to connect his trade,
The boy was bound where blocks and ropes were made
George, strong and steady, had a tender mind,
And was to Isaac pitiful and kind:
A very father, till his art was gain'd,
And then a friend unwearied he remain'd;
He saw his brother was of spirit low,
His temper peevish, and his motions slow;

Not fit to bustle in a world, or make
Friends to his fortune for his merit's sake;
But the kind sailor could not boast the art
Of looking deeply in the human heart;
Else had he seen that this weak brother knew
What men to court—what objects to pursue,
That he to distant gain the way discern'd,
And none so crooked but his genius learn'd.
Isaac was poor, and this the brother felt:
He hired a house, and there the Landman dwelt;
Wrought at his trade, and had an easy home,
For there would George with cash and comforts come·
And when they parted, Isaac look'd around,
Where other friends and helpers might be found.
He wish'd for some port-place, and one might fall,
He wisely thought, if he should try for all;
He had a vote—and were it well applied,
Might have its worth—and he had views beside;
Old Burgess Steel was able to promote
An humble man who served him with a vote;
For Isaac felt not what some tempers feel,
But bow'd and bent the neck to Burgess Steel;
And great attention to a Lady gave,
His ancient friend, a maiden spare and grave:
One whom the visage long and look demure
Of Isaac pleased—he seem'd sedate and pure;
And his soft heart conceived a gentle flame
For her who waited on this virtuous dame:
Not an outrageous love, a scorching fire,
But friendly liking and chastised desire;
And thus he waited, patient in delay,
In present favour and in fortune's way.
George then was coasting—war was yet delay'd,
And what he gain'd was to his brother paid;
Nor ask'd the Seaman what he saved or spent;
But took his grog, wrought hard, and was content;
Till war awaked the land, and George began
To think what part became a useful man.
"Press'd, I must go; why, then, 't is better far
At once to enter like a British tar,
Than a brave captain and the foe to shun,
As if I fear'd the music of a gun."
"Go not!" said Isaac—"You shall wear disguise."
"What!" said the Seaman, "clothe myself with lies!"—
"Oh! but there's danger."—"Danger in the fleet?
You cannot mean, good brother, of defeat;
And other dangers I at land must share—
So now adieu! and trust a brother's care."

Isaac awhile demurr'd—but, in his heart,
So might he share, he was disposed to part:
The better mind will sometimes feel the pain
Of benefactions—favour in a chain;
But they the feeling scorn, and what they wish disdain;—
While beings formed in coarser mould will hate
The helping hand they ought to venerate;
No wonder George should in this cause prevail
With one contending who was glad to fail:
"Isaac, farewell! do wipe that doleful eye;
Crying we came, and groaning we may die;
Let us do something 'twixt the groan and cry:
And hear me, brother, whether pay or prize,
One half to thee I give and I devise.
For thou hast oft occasion for the aid
Of learn'd physicians, and they will be paid;
Their wives and children, men support, at sea,
And thou, my lad, art wife and child to me:
Farewell!—I go where hope and honour call,
Nor does it follow that who fights must fall.'
Isaac here made a poor attempt to speak,
And a huge tear moved slowly down his cheek;
Like Pluto's iron drop, hard sign of grace
It slowly roll'd upon the rueful face,
Forced by the striving will alone its way to trace.
Years fled—war lasted—George at sea remain'd,
While the slow Landman still his profits gain'd:
A humble place was vacant—he besought
His patron's interest, and the office caught;
For still the Virgin was his faithful friend,
And one so sober could with truth commend,
Who of his own defects most humbly thought,
And their advice with zeal and reverence sought:
Whom thus the Mistress praised, the Maid approved
And her he wedded whom he wisely loved.
No more he needs assistance—but, alas!
He fears the money will for liquor pass;
Or that the Seaman might to flatterers lend,
Or give support to some pretended friend:
Still he must write—he wrote, and he confess'd
That, till absolved, he should be sore distress'd;
But one so friendly would, he thought, forgive
The hasty deed—Heav'n knew how he should live;
'But you," he added, "as a man of sense,
Have well consider'd danger and expense:
I ran, alas! into the fatal snare,
And now for trouble must my mind prepare;
And, how, with children, I shall pick my way,
Through a hard world, is more than I can say;

Then change not, Brother, your more happy state
Or on the hazard long deliberate."
George answer'd gravely, "It is right and fit,
In all our crosses, humbly to submit:
Your apprehensions are unwise, unjust;
Forbear repining, and expel distrust."—
He added, "Marriage was the joy of life,"
And gave his service to his brother's wife;
Then vow'd to bear in all expense a part,
And thus concluded, "Have a cheerful heart."
Had the glad Isaac been his brother's guide,
In the same terms the Seaman had replied;
At such reproofs the crafty Landman smiled,
And softly said—"This creature is a child."
Twice had the gallant ship a capture made—
And when in port the happy crew were paid,
Home went the Sailor, with his pockets stored,
Ease to enjoy, and pleasure to afford;
His time was short, joy shone in every face,
Isaac half fainted in the fond embrace:
The wife resolved her honour'd guest to please
The children clung upon their uncle's knees:
The grog went round, the neighbours drank his health,
And George exclaim'd—"Ah! what to this is wealth?
Better," said he, "to bear a loving heart,
Than roll in riches——but we now must part!"
All yet is still—but hark! the winds o'erswe[illegible]
The rising waves, and howl upon the deep:
Ships late becalm'd on mountain-billows ride—
So life is threaten'd, and so man is tried.
Ill were the tidings that arrived from sea,
The worthy George must now a cripple be:
His leg was lopp'd; and though his heart was sound
Though his brave captain was with glory crown'd—
Yet much it vex'd him to repose on shore,
An idle log, and be of use no more:
True, he was sure that Isaac would receive
All of his Brother that the foe might leave;
To whom the Seaman his design had sent,
Ere from the port the wounded hero went:
His wealth and expectations told, he "knew
Wherin they fail'd, what Isaac's love would do;
That he the grog and cabin would supply
Where George at anchor during life would lie."
The Landman read—and, reading, grew distress'd:—
"Could he resolve t' admit so poor a guest?
Better at Greenwich might the Sailor stay,
Unless his purse could for his comforts pay:"

So Isaac judged, and to his wife appeal'd,
But yet acknowledged it was best to yield:
"Perhaps his pension, with what sums remain
Due or unsquander'd, may the man maintain;
Refuse we must not."—With a heavy sigh
The lady heard, and made her kind reply:—
"Nor would I wish it, Isaac, were we sure
How long this crazy building will endure;
Like an old house, that every day appears
About to fall—he may be propp'd for years:
For a few months, indeed, we might comply,
But these old batter'd fellows never die."

The hand of Isaac, George on entering took,
With love and resignation in his look:
Declared his comfort in the fortune past,
And joy to find his anchor safely cast:
"Call then my nephews, let the grog be brought,
And I will tell them how the ship was fought."

Alas! our simple Seaman should have known,
That all the care, the kindness, he had shown,
Were from his Brother's heart, if not his memory flown
All swept away to be perceived no more,
Like idle structures on the sandy shore:
The chance amusement of the playful boy,
That the rude billows in their rage destroy.

Poor George confess'd, though loth the truth to find,
Slight was his knowledge of a Brother's mind:
The vulgar pipe was to the wife offence,
The frequent grog to Isaac an expense:
Would friends like hers, she question'd, "choose to come
Where clouds of poison'd fume defiled a room?
This could their Lady-friend, and Burgess Steel,
(Teased with his worship's asthma) bear to feel?
Could they associate or converse with him—
A loud rough sailor with a timber limb?"

Cold as he grew, still Isaac strove to show,
By well-feign'd care, that cold he could not grow,
And when he saw his brother look distress'd,
He strove some petty comforts to suggest;
On his wife solely their neglect to lay,
And then t' excuse it, as a woman's way;
He too was chidden when her rules he broke,
And then she sicken'd at the scent of smoke.

George, though in doubt, was still consoled to find
His Brother wishing to be reckon'd kind:
That Isaac seem'd concern'd by his distress,
Gave to his injured feelings some redress;
But none he found disposed to lend an ear;
To stories, all were once intent to hear:

Except his nephew, seated on his knee,
He found no creature cared about the sea;
But George indeed—for George they call'd the boy
When his good uncle was their boast and joy—
Would listen long, and would contend with sleep
To hear the woes and wonders of the deep:
Till the fond mother cried—"That man will teach
The foolish boy his loud and boisterous speech."
So judged the father—and the boy was taught
To shun the uncle, whom his love had sought.

The mask of kindness now but seldom worn,
George felt each evil harder to be borne:
And cried (vexation growing day by day),
"Ah! brother Isaac!—What! I'm in the way!"
"No! on my credit, look ye, No! but I
Am fond of peace, and my repose would buy
On any terms—in short, we must comply:
My spouse had money—she must have her will—
Ah! Brother—marriage is a bitter pill."—

George tried the lady—"Sister I offend."
"Me?" she replied—"Oh no!—you may depend
On my regard—but watch your Brother's way,
Whom I, like you, must study and obey."

"Ah!" thought the Seaman, "what a head was mine
That easy birth at Greenwich to resign!
I'll to the parish"——but a little pride,
And some affection, put the thought aside.

Now gross neglect and open scorn he bore
In silent sorrow—but he felt the more:
The odious pipe he to the kitchen took,
Or strove to profit by some pious book.

When the mind stoops to this degraded state,
New griefs will darken the dependent's fate:
"Brother!" said Isaac, "you will sure excuse
The little freedom I'm compell'd to use:
My wife's relations—(curse the haughty crew)—
Affect such niceness, and such dread of you:
You speak so loud—and they have nature soft—
Brother——I wish——do go upon the loft!"

Poor George obey'd, and to the garret fled,
Where not a being saw the tears he shed:
But more was yet required, for guests were come,
Who could not dine if he disgraced the room.
It shock'd his spirit to be esteem'd unfit
With an own brother and his wife to sit;
He grew rebellious—at the vestry spoke
For weekly aid——they heard it as a joke:
"So kind a brother, and so wealthy——you
Apply to us? ——No! this will never do:

Good neighbour Fletcher," said the Overseer
"We are engaged—you can have nothing here!"
George mutter'd something in despairing tone
Then sought his loft, to think and grieve alone,
Neglected, slighted, restless on his bed,
With heart half broken, and with scraps ill fed;
Yet was he pleased, that hours for play design'd
Were given to ease his ever-troubled mind;
The child still listen'd with increasing joy,
And he was sooth'd by the attentive boy.
At length he sicken'd, and this duteous child
Watch'd o'er his sickness, and his pains beguiled;
The mother bade him from the loft refrain,
But, though with caution, yet he went again;
And now his tales the Sailor feebly told,
His heart was heavy, and his limbs were cold:
The tender boy came often to entreat
His good kind friend would of his presents eat;
Purloin'd or purchased, for he saw, with shame,
The food untouch'd that to his uncle came;
Who, sick in body and in mind, received
The boy's indulgence, gratified and grieved.
"Uncle will die!" said George—the pitcous wife
Exclaim'd, "she saw no value in his life;
But, sick or well, to my commands attend,
And go no more to your complaining friend."
The boy was vex'd, he felt his heart reprove
The stern decree.—What! punish'd for his love!
No! he would go, but softly, to the room,
Stealing in silence—for he knew his doom.
Once in a week the father came to say,
"George are you ill?"—and hurried him away
Yet to his wife would on their duties dwell,
And often cry, "Do use my brother well:"
And something kind, no question, Isaac meant,
Who took vast credit for the vague intent.
But truly kind, the gentle boy essay'd
To cheer his uncle, firm, although afraid;
But now the father caught him at the door,
And, swearing—yes, the man in office swore,
And cried, "Away! How! Brother, I'm surprised
That one so old can be so ill advised:
Let him not dare to visit you again,
Your cursed stories will disturb his brain;
Is it not vile to court a foolish boy,
Your own absurd narrations to enjoy?
What! sullen!—ah, George Fletcher! you shall see
Proud as you are, your bread depends on me!"

He spoke, and, frowning, to his dinner went,
Then cool'd and felt some qualms of discontent;
And thought on times when he compell'd his son
To hear these stories, nay, to beg for one:
But the wife's wrath o'ercame the brother's pain,
And shame was felt, and conscience rose in vain.
George yet stole up; he saw his Uncle lie
Sick on the bed, and heard his heavy sigh:
So he resolved, before he went to rest,
To comfort one so dear and so distress'd:
Then watch'd his time, but with a child-like art,
Betray'd a something treasured at his heart:
Th observant wife remark'd, "the boy is grown
So like your brother, that he seems his own;
So close and sullen! and I still suspect
They often meet—do watch them and detect."
George now remark'd that all was still as night,
And hasten'd up with terror and delight;
"Uncle!" he cried, and softly tapp'd the door;
"Do let me in"—but he could add no more;
The careful father caught him in the fact,
And cried,—"You serpent! is it thus you act?
Back to your mother! —and, with hasty blow,
He sent the indignant boy to grieve below;
Then at the door an angry speech began—
"Is this your conduct?—Is it thus you plan?
Seduce my child, and make my house a scene
Of vile dispute—What is that you mean?—
George, are you dumb? do learn to know your friends,
And think awhile on whom your bread depends:
What! not a word? be thankful I am cool—
But, sir, beware, nor longer play the fool:
Come! brother, come! what is it that you seek
By this rebellion?—Speak, you villain, speak!—
Weeping! I warrant—sorrow makes you dumb:
I'll ope your mouth, impostor! if I come:
Let me approach—I'll shake you from the bed,
You stubborn dog——Oh God! my Brother's dead!—"
Timid was Isaac, and in all the past
He felt a purpose to be kind at last:
Nor did he mean his brother to depart,
Till he had shown this kindness of his heart.
But day by day he put the cause aside,
Induced by av'rice, peevishness, or pride.
But now awaken'd, from this fatal time
His conscience Isaac felt, and found his crime:
He raised to George a monumental stone,
And there retired to sigh and think alone;

An ague seized him, he grew pale and shook
"So," said his son, "would my poor Uncle look."
"And so, my child, shall I like him expire."
"No! you have physic and a cheerful fire."
"Unhappy sinner! yes, I'm well supplied
With every comfort my cold heart denied."
He view'd his Brother now, but not as one
Who vex'd his wife, by fondness for her son;
Not as with wooden limb, and seaman's tale,
The odious pipe, vile grog, or humbler ale:
He now the worth and grief alone can view
Of one so mild, so generous, and so true;
"The frank, kind Brother, with such open heart,
And I to break it——'t was a dæmon's part!"
So Isaac now, as led by conscience, feels.
Nor his unkindness palliates or conceals;
"This is your folly," said his heartless wife:
"Alas! my folly cost my Brother's life,
It suffer'd him to languish and decay.
My gentle brother, whom I could not pay,
And therefore left to pine, and fret his life away!"
He takes his Son, and bids the boy unfold
All the good Uncle of his feelings told,
All he lamented—and the ready tear
Falls as he listens, soothed, and grieves to hear.
"Did he not curse me, child?"—He never cursed,
But could not breathe, and said his heart would burst
"And so will mine:"—"Then, father, you must pray
My uncle said it took his pains away."
Repeating thus his sorrows, Isaac shows
That he, repenting, feels the debt he owes,
And from this source alone his every comfort flows.
He takes no joy in office, honours, gain;
They make him humble, nay, they give him pain;
"These from my heart," he cries, "all feeling drove;
They made me cold to nature, dead to love:"
He takes no joy in home, but sighing, sees
A son in sorrow, and a wife at ease;
He takes no joy in office—see him now,
And Burgess Steel has but a passing bow;
Of one sad train of gloomy thoughts possess'd,
He takes no joy in friends, in food, in rest—
Dark are the evil days, and void of peace the best;
And thus he lives, if living be to sigh,
And from all comforts of the world to fly,
Without a hope in life—without a wish to die.

TALE XXI.

THE LEARNED BOY.

——Like one well studied in a sad ostent
To please his grandam.—*Merchant of Venice.*

——He is a better scholar than I thought he was——
He has a good sprag memory.—*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

An honest man was *Farmer Jones*, and true;
He did by all as all by him should do;
Grave, cautious, careful, fond of gain was he,
Yet famed for rustic hospitality:
Left with his children in a widow'd state,
The quiet man submitted to his fate;
Though prudent matrons waited for his call,
With cool forbearance he avoided all:
Though each profess'd a pure maternal joy,
By kind attention to his feeble boy:
And though a friendly Widow knew no rest,
Whilst neighbour Jones was lonely and distress'd;
Nay, though the maidens spoke in tender tone,
Their hearts' concern to see him left alone—
Jones still persisted in that cheerless life,
As if 'twere sin to take a second wife.

Oh! 'tis a precious thing, when wives are dead,
To find such numbers who will serve instead:
And in whatever state a man be thrown,
'Tis that precisely they would wish their own;
Left the departed infants—then their joy
Is to sustain each lovely girl and boy.
Whatever calling his, whatever trade,
To that their chief attention has been paid;
His happy taste in all things they approve,
His friends they honour, and his food they love;
His wish for order, prudence in affairs,
And equal temper, (thank their stars!) are theirs;
In fact it seem'd to be a thing decreed,
And fix'd as fate, that marriage must succeed:
Yet some, like Jones, with stubborn hearts and hard,
Can hear such claims, and show them no regard.

Soon as our Farmer, like a general, found
By what strong foes he was encompass'd round.—
Engage he dared not, and he could not fly,
But saw his hope in gentle parley lie:
With looks of kindness then, and trembling heart
He met the foe, and art opposed to art.

Now spoke that foe insidious—gentle tones,
And gentle looks, assumed for Farmer Jones:
"Three girls," the Widow cried, "a lively three
To govern well—indeed it cannot be"
"Yes," he replied, "it calls for pains and care;
But I must bear it:"—"Sir, you cannot bear;
Your son is weak, and asks a mother's eye:"
"That, my kind friend, a father's may supply:"
"Such growing griefs your very soul will tease:"
"To grieve another would not give me ease—
I have a mother"—"She, poor ancient soul!
Can she the spirits of the young control?
Can she thy peace promote, partake thy care,
Procure thy comforts, and thy sorrows share?
Age is itself impatient, uncontroll'd:"
'But wives like mothers must at length be old."
"Thou hast shrewd servants—they are evils sore:"
"Yet a shrewd mistress might afflict me more."
"Wilt thou not be a weary, wailing man?"
"Alas! and I must bear it as I can."

Resisted thus, the Widow soon withdrew,
That in his pride the Hero might pursue:
And off his wonted guard, in some retreat,
Find from a foe prepared entire defeat:
But he was prudent; for he knew in flight
These Parthian warriors turn again and fight:
He but at freedom, not at glory aim'd,
And only safety by his caution claim'd.

Thus, when a great and powerful state decrees,
Upon a small one, in its love, to seize—
Its vows in kindness to protect, defend,
And be the fond ally, the faithful friend;
It therefore wills that humbler state to place
Its hopes of safety in a fond embrace:
Then must that humbler state its wisdom prove,
By kind rejection of such pressing love;
Must dread such dangerous friendship to commence,
And stand collected in its own defence:—
Our Farmer thus the proffer'd kindness fled,
And shunn'd the love that into bondage led.

The Widow failing, fresh besiegers came,
To share the fate of this retiring dame:

And each foresaw a thousand ills attend
The man, that fled from so discreet a friend;
And pray'd, kind soul! that no event might make
The harden'd heart of Farmer Jones to ache.
But he still govern'd with resistless hand,
And where he could not guide he would command:
With steady view in course direct he steer'd,
And his fair daughters loved him, though they fear'd;
Each had her school, and as his wealth was known,
Each had in time a household of her own.
The boy indeed was at the Grandam's side,
Humour'd and train'd, her trouble and her pride:
Companions dear, with speech and spirits mild,
The childish widow and the vapourish child:
This nature prompts: minds uniformed and weak
In such alliance ease and comfort seek;
Push'd by the levity of youth aside,
The cares of man, his humour, or his pride,
They feel, in their defenceless state, allied:
The child is pleased to meet regard from age,
The old are pleased ev'n children to engage:
And all their wisdom, scorn'd by proud mankind,
They love to pour into the ductile mind;
By its own weakness into error led,
And by fond age with prejudices fed.
The Father, thankful for the good he had,
Yet saw with pain a whining, timid lad:
Whom he instructing led through cultured fields,
To show what man performs, what Nature yields:
But Stephen, listless, wander'd from the view,
From beasts he fled, for butterflies he flew,
And idly gazed about, in search of something new.
The lambs indeed he loved, and wish'd to play
With things so mild, so harmless, and so gay;
Best pleased the weakest of the flock to see,
With whom he felt a sickly sympathy.
Meantime the Dame was anxious, day and night,
To guide the notions of her babe aright,
And on the favourite mind to throw her glimmering light
Her Bible-stories she impress'd betimes,
And fill'd his head with hymns and holy rhymes,
On powers unseen, the good and ill, she dwelt,
And the poor Boy mysterious terrors felt:
From frightful dreams, he waking sobb'd in dread,
Till the good lady came to guard his bed.
The Father wish'd such errors to correct,
But let them pass in duty and respect:

But more it grieved his worthy mind to see
That *Stephen* never would a farmer be;
In vain he tried the shiftless Lad to guide,
And yet 'twas time that something should be tried:
He at the village-school perchance might gain
All that such mind could gather and retain;
Yet the good Dame affirm'd her favourite child
Was apt and studious, though sedate and mild;
"That he on many a learned point could speak,
And that his body, not his mind, was weak."

The Father doubted—but to school was sent
The timid Stephen, weeping as he went:
There the rude lads compell'd the child to fight,
And sent him bleeding to his home at night;
At this the Grandam more indulgent grew,
And bade her Darling "shun the beastly crew,
Whom Satan ruled, and who were sure to lie,
Howling in torments, when they came to die:"
This was such comfort, that in high disdain
He told their fate, and felt their blows again:
Yet if the Boy had not a hero's heart,
Within the school he play'd a better part;
He wrote a clean fine hand, and at his slate,
With more success than many a hero, sate;
He thought not much indeed—but what depends
On pains and care, was at his fingers' ends.

This had his Father's praise, who now espied
A spark of merit, with a blaze of pride;
And though a farmer he would never make,
He might a pen with some advantage take;
And as a clerk that instrument employ,
So well adapted to a timid boy.

A London cousin soon a place obtain'd,
Easy but humble—little could be gain'd:
The time arrived when youth and age must part,
Tears in each eye, and sorrow in each heart;
The careful Father bade his son attend
To all his duties and obey his Friend;
To keep his church and there behave aright,
As one existing in his Maker's sight,
Till acts to habits led, and duty to delight:
"Then try, my boy, as quickly as you can,
T' assume the looks and spirit of a man;
I say, be honest, faithful, civil, true,
And this you may, and yet have courage too
Heroic men, their country's boast and pride,
Have fear'd their God, and nothing fear'd beside;

While others daring, yet imbecile, fly
The power of man, and that of God defy:
Be manly, then, though mild, for, sure as fate,
Thou art, my Stephen, too effeminate;
Here, take my purse, and make a worthy use
('Tis fairly stock'd) of what it will produce:
And now my blessing, not as any charm
Or conjuration; but 'twill do no harm.'

Stephen, whose thoughts were wandering up and down
Now charm'd with promised sights in London-town,
Now loth to leave his Grandam—lost the force,
The drift and tenor of this grave discourse;
But, in a general way, he understood
'Twas good advice, and meant, "My son, be good;"
And Stephen knew that all such precepts mean,
That lads should read their Bible, and be clean.
The good old Lady, though in some distress,
Begg'd her dear Stephen would his grief suppress;
"Nay, dry those eyes my child—and, first of all,
Hold fast thy faith, whatever may befall;
Hear the best preacher, and preserve the text
For meditation, till you hear the next:
Within your Bible night and morning look—
There is your duty, read no other book;
Be not in crowds, in broils, in riots seen,
And keep your conscience and your linen clean:
Be you a Joseph, and the time may be,
When kings and rulers will be rul'd by thee."

"Nay," said the Father——"Hush, my son," replied
The Dame——"The Scriptures must not be denied."

The Lad, still weeping, heard the wheels approach,
And took his place within the evening coach,
With heart quite rent asunder: on one side
Was love, and grief, and fear, for scenes untried;
Wild-beasts and wax-work fill'd the happier part
Of Stephen's varying and divided heart;
This he betray'd by sighs and questions strange,
Of famous shows, the Tow'r, and the Exchange.

Soon at his desk was placed the curious Boy
Demure and silent at his new employ:
Yet as he could, he much attention paid
To all around him, cautious and afraid;
On older Clerks his eager eyes were fix'd,
But Stephen never in their council mix'd;
Much their contempt he fear'd, for if like them,
He felt assured he should himself contemn;
"Oh! they were all so eloquent, so free,
No! he was nothing—nothing could he be:

They dress so smartly, and so boldly look,
And talk as if they read it from a book;
But I," said Stephen, "will forbear to speak,
And they will think me prudent and not weak
They talk, the instant they have dropp'd the pen,
Of singing-women and of acting men;
Of plays and places where at night they walk
Beneath the lamps, and with the ladies talk;
While other ladies for their pleasure sing,
Oh! 'tis a glorious and a happy thing:
They would despise me, did they understand
I dare not look upon a scene so grand;
Or see the plays when critics rise and roar,
And hiss and groan, and cry—Encore! encore!—
There's one among them looks a little kind;
If more encouraged, I would ope my mind."

Alas! poor Stephen, happier had he kept
His purpose secret, while his envy slept;
Virtue, perhaps, had conquer'd, or his shame
At least preserved him simple as he came.
A year elapsed before this Clerk began
To treat the rustic something like a man;
He then in trifling points the youth advised,
Talk'd of his coat, and had it modernised:
Or with the lad a Sunday-walk would take,
And kindly strive his passions to awake:
Meanwhile explaining all they heard and saw,
Till Stephen stood in wonderment and awe:
To a neat garden near the town they stray'd,
Where the Lad felt delighted and afraid;
There all he saw was smart, and fine, and fair—
He could but marvel how he ventured there:
Soon he observed, with terror and alarm,
His friend enlock'd within a lady's arm,
And freely talking—"But it is," said he,
"A near relation, and that makes him free;"
And much amazed was Stephen, when he knew
This was the first and only interview:
Nay, had that lovely arm by him been seized,
The lovely owner had been highly pleased:
"Alas!" he sigh'd, "I never can contrive,
At such bold, blessed freedoms to arrive;
Never shall I such happy courage boast,
I dare as soon encounter with a ghost."

Now to a play the friendly couple went,
But the Boy murmur'd at the money spent;
"He loved," he said, "to buy, but not to spend—
They only talk awhile, and there's an end."

"Come, you shall purchase books," the Friend replied;
"You are bewilder'd, and you want a guide;
To me refer the choice, and you shall find
The light break in upon your stagnant mind!"
The cooler Clerks exclaim'd, "In vain your art
To improve a cub without a head or heart:
Rasties though coarse, and savages though wild,
Our cares may render liberal and mild;
But what, my friend, can flow from all these pains?
There is no dealing with a lack of brains."—
"True I am hopeless to behold him man,
But let me make the booby what I can.
Though the rude stone no polish will display,
Yet you may strip the rugged coat away."
Stephen beheld his books—"I love to know
How money goes—now here is that to show:
And now," he cried, "I shall be pleased to get
Beyond the Bible—there I puzzle yet."
He spoke abash'd—"Nay! nay!" the friend replied,
"You need not lay the good old book aside:
Antique and curious, I myself indeed
Read it at times, but as a man should read;
A fine old work it is, and I protest
I hate to hear it treated as a jest;
The book has wisdom in it, if you look
Wisely upon it, as another book.
For superstition (as our priests of sin
Are pleased to tell us) makes us blind within;
Of this hereafter—we will now select
Some works to please you, others to direct:
Tales and romances shall your fancy feed,
And reasoners form your morals and your creed."
The books were view'd, the price was fairly paid.
And Stephen read undaunted, undismay'd:
But not till first he paper'd all the row,
And placed in order to enjoy the show;
Next letter'd all the backs with care and speed,
Set them in ranks, and then began to read.
The love of order,—I the thing receive
From reverend men, and I in part believe,—
Shows a clear mind and clean, and who so needs
This love, but seldom in the world succeeds;
And yet with this some other love must be,
Ere I can fully to the fact agree:
Valour and study may by order gain,
By order sovereigns hold more steady reign;
Through all the tribes of nature order runs,
And rules around in systems and in suns

Still has the love of order found a place,
With all that's low, degrading, mean, and base,
With all that merits scorn, and all that meets disgrace;
In the cold miser, of all change afraid,
In pompous men in public seats obey'd;
In humble placemen, heralds, solemn drones,
Fanciers of flowers, and lads like Stephen Jones;
Order to these is armour and defence,
And love of method serves in lack of sense.

For rustic youth could I a list produce
Of Stephen's books, how great might be the use;
But evil fate was theirs—survey'd, enjoy'd
Some happy months, and then by force destroy'd:
So will'd the Fates—but these with patience read,
Had vast effect on Stephen's heart and head.

This soon appear'd—within a single week
He oped his lips, and made attempt to speak;
He fail'd indeed—but still his Friend confess'd
The best have fail'd, and he had done his best:
The first of swimmers, when at first he swims,
Has little use or freedom in his limbs;
Nay, when at length he strikes with manly force,
The cramp may seize him, and impede his course.

Encouraged thus, our Clerk again essay'd
The daring act, though daunted and afraid;
Succeeding now, though partial his success,
And pertness mark'd his manner and address,
Yet such improvement issued from his books,
That all discern'd it in his speech and looks:
He ventured then on every theme to speak,
And felt no feverish tingling in his cheek;
His friend approving, hail'd the happy change,
The Clerks exclaim'd—"'Tis famous, and 'tis strange!"

Two years had pass'd; the Youth attended still,
(Though thus accomplish'd) with a ready quill;
He sat th' allotted hours, though hard the case,
While timid prudence ruled in virtue's place:
By promise bound, the Son his letters penn'd
To his good parent, at the quarter's end.
At first he sent those lines, the state to tell
Of his own health, and hoped his friends were well
He kept their virtuous precepts in his mind,
And needed nothing—then his name was sign'd:
But now he wrote of Sunday-walks and views,
Of actors' names, choice novels, and strange news,
How coats were cut, and of his urgent need
For fresh supply, which he desired with speed.
The Father doubted, when these letters came,
To what they tended, yet was loath to blame:

"Stephen was once *my dutcous son*, and now
My most obedient—this can I allow?
Can I with pleasure or with patience see
A boy at once so heartless, and so free?"
But soon the kinsman heavy tidings told,
That love and prudence could no more withhold:
"Stephen, though steady at his desk, was grown
A rake and coxcomb—this he grieved to own;
His cousin left his church, and spent the day
Lounging about in quite a heathen way;
Sometimes he swore, but had indeed the grace
To show the shame imprinted on his face:
I search'd his room, and in his absence read
Books that I knew would turn a stronger head;
The works of atheists half the number made,
The rest were lives of harlots leaving trade;
Which neither man nor boy would deign to read,
If from the scandal and pollution freed:
I sometimes threaten'd, and would fairly state
My sense of things so vile and profligate;
But I in a cit, such works are lost on me—
They're knowledge, and (good Lord!) philosophy."
"Oh, send him down," the Father soon replied;
'Let me behold him, and my skill be tried:
If care and kindness lose their wonted use,
Some rougher medicine will the end produce."
Stephen with grief and anger heard his doom—
"Go to the farmer? to the rustic's home?
Curse the base threat'ning—" "Nay, child, never curse
Corrupted long your case is growing worse."—
"I!" quoth the youth, "I challenge all mankind
To find a fault: what fault have you to find?
Improve I not in manner, speech, and grace?
Inquire—my friends will tell it to your face;
Have I been taught to guard his kine and sheep?
A man like me has other things to keep;
This let him know."—"It would his wrath excite:
But come, prepare, you must away to night."
"What! leave my studies, my improvements leave,
My faithful friends and intimates to grieve!"—
"Go to your father, Stephen, let him see
All these improvements; they are lost on me."
The youth, though loth, obey'd, and soon he saw
The Farmer-father, with some signs of awe;
Who kind, yet silent, waited to behold
How one would act, so daring, yet so cold:
And soon he found, between the friendly pair
Tha. secrets pass'd which he was not to share;

But he resolved those secrets to obtain,
And quash rebellion in his lawful reign.
Stephen, though vain, was with his father mute
He fear'd a crisis, and he shunn'd dispute:
And yet he long'd with youthful pride to show
He knew such things as farmers could not know;
These to the Grandam he with freedom spoke,
Saw her amazement, and enjoyed the joke:
But on the father when he cast his eye,
Something he found that made his valour shy,
And thus there seem'd to be a hollow truce,
Still threatening something dismal to produce.
Ere this the father at his leisure read
The son's choice volumes, and his wonder fled,
He saw how wrought the works of either kind
On so presuming, yet so weak a mind:
These in a chosen hour he made his prey,
Condemn'd, and bore with vengeful thoughts away
Then in a close recess the couple near,
He sat unseen to see, unheard to hear
There soon a trial for his patience came:
Beneath were placed the Youth and ancient Dame,
Each on a purpose fix'd—but neither thought
How near a foe, with power and vengeance fraught.
And now the matron told, as tidings sad,
What she had heard of her beloved lad:
How he to graceless, wicked men gave heed,
And wicked books would night and morning read:
Some former lectures she again began,
And begg'd attention of her little man;
She brought, with many a pious boast, in view
His former studies, and condemn'd the new:
Once he the name of saints and patriarchs old,
Judges and kings, and chiefs and prophets, told;
Then he in winter-nights the Bible took,
To count how often in the sacred book
The sacred name appear'd, and could rehearse
Which were the middle chapter, word, and verse,
The very letter in the middle placed,
And so employ'd the hours that others waste.
"Such wert thou once; and now, my child, they say
Thy faith like water runneth fast away;
The prince of devils hath, I fear, beguiled
The ready wit of my backsliding child."
On this, with lofty looks, our Clerk began
His grave rebuke, as he assumed the man—
"There is no devil," said the hopeful youth,
"Nor prince of devils; that I know for truth·

Have I not told you how my books describe
The arts of priests, and all the canting tribe?
Your Bible mentions Egypt, where it seems
Was Joseph found when Pharaoh dream'd his dreams:
Now in that place, in some bewilder'd brain,
(The learned write) religious dreams were bred;
Whence through the earth, with various forms combined,
They came to frighten and afflict mankind,
Prone (so I read) to let a priest invade
Their souls with awe, and by his craft be made
Slave to his will, and profit to his trade:
So say my books, and how the rogues agreed
To blind the victims, to defraud and lead;
When joys above to ready dupes were sold,
And hell was threaten'd to the shy and cold.
"Why so amazed, and so prepared to pray?
As if a Being heard a word we say:
This may surprise you; I myself began
To feel disturb'd, and to my Bible ran;
I now am wiser—yet agree in this,
The book has things that are not much amiss;
It is a fine old work, and I protest
I hate to hear it treated as a jest:
The book has wisdom in it, if you look
Wisely upon it as another book."—
"Oh! wicked! wicked! my unhappy child,
How hast thou been by evil men beguiled!"
"How! wicked, say you? you can little guess
The gain of that which you call wickedness:
Why, sins you think it sinful but to name
Have gain'd both wives and widows, wealth and fame;
And this because such people never dread
Those threaten'd pains; hell comes not in their head:
Love is our nature, wealth we all desire,
And what we wish 't is lawful to acquire;
So say my books—and what beside they show
'T is time to let this honest farmer know.
Nay, look not grave: am I commanded down
To feed his cattle and become his clown?
Is such his purpose? then he shall be told
The vulgar insult ———
——— Hold, in mercy hold—
Father, oh! father! throw the whip away;
I was but jesting, on my knees I pray—
There, hold his arm—oh! leave us not alone:
In pity cease, and I will yet atone
For all my sin ———" In vain; stroke, stroke,
On side and shoulder, quick as mill-wheels broke,

Quick as the patient's pulse, who trembling cried
And still the parent with a stroke replied;
Till all the medicine he prepared was dealt
And every bone the precious influence felt;
Till all the panting flesh was red and raw,
And every thought was turn'd to fear and awe·
Till every doubt to due respect gave place—
Such cures are done when doctors know the case.
"Oh! I shall die—my father! do receive
My dying words; indeed I do believe;
The books are lying books, I know it well,
There is a devil, oh! there is a hell:
And I'm a sinner: spare me, I am young
My sinful words were only on my tongue;
My heart consented not: 't is all a lie:
Oh! spare me then, I'm not prepared to die."
"Vain, worthless, stupid wretch!" the Father cried.
"Dost thou presume to teach? art thou a guide?
Driveller and dog, it gave the mind distress
To hear thy thoughts in their religious dress,
Thy pious folly moved my strong disdain,
Yet I forgave thee for thy want of brain:
But Job in patience must the man exceed
Who could endure thee in thy present creed;
Is it for thee, thou idiot, to pretend
The wicked cause a helping hand to lend?
Canst thou a judge in any question be?
Atheists themselves would scorn a friend like thee.—
"Lo! yonder blaze thy worthies: in one heap
Thy scoundrel-favourites must for ever sleep:
Each yields its poison to the flame in turn,
Where whores and infidels are doom'd to burn;
Two noble faggots made the flame you see,
Reserving only two fair twigs for thee:
That in thy view the instruments may stand,
And be in future ready for my hand:
Alle just mementos that, though silent, show
Whence thy correction and improvements flow;
Beholding these, thou wilt confess their power,
And feel the shame of this important hour
"Hadst thou been humble, I had first design'd
By care from folly to have freed thy mind:
And when a clean foundation had been laid,
Our priest, more able, would have lent his aid:
But thou art weak, and force must folly guide,
And thou art vain, and pain must humble pride:
Teachers men honour, learners they allure;
But learners teaching, of contempt are sure;
Scorn is their certain meed, and smart their only cure!"

CRABBE'S POEMS.

THE LIBRARY.

Books afford consolation to the troubled Mind, by substituting a lighter Kind of Distress for its own—They are productive of other advantages—An Author's Hope of being Known in distant Times—Arrangement of the Library—Size and form of the Volumes—The ancient folio, clasped and chained—Fashion prevalent even in this Place—The mode of publishing in Numbers, Pamphlets, &c.—Subjects of the different Classes—Divinity—Controversy—The Friends of Religion often more dangerous than her Foes—Sceptical Authors—Reason too much rejected by the former Converts; exclusively relied upon by the latter—Philosophy ascending through the Scale of Being to moral Subjects—Books of Medicine; their Variety, Variance, and Proneness to System; the Evil of this, and the Difficulty it causes—Farewell to this Study—Law: the increasing Number of its Volumes—Supposed happy State of Man without Laws—Progress of Society—Historians: their Subjects—Dramatic Authors, Tragic and Comic—Ancient Romances—The Captive Heroine—Happiness in the Perusal of such Books: why—Criticism—Apprehensions of the Author: removed by the Appearance of the Genius of the Place; whose Reasoning and Admonition conclude the Subject.

When the sad soul, by care and grief oppress'd,
Looks round the world, but looks in vain for rest;
When every object that appears in view,
Partakes her gloom and seems dejected too,
Where shall affliction from itself retire?
Where fade away and placidly expire?
Alas! we fly to silent scenes in vain;
Care blasts the honours of the flow'ry plain:
Care veils in clouds the sun's meridian beam,
Sighs through the grove, and murmurs in the stream;
For when the soul is labouring in despair
In vain the body breathes a purer air.
No storm-tost sailor sighs for slumbering seas,—
He dreads the tempest, but invokes the breeze;
On the smooth mirror of the deep resides
Reflected woe, and o er unruffled tides
The ghost of every former danger glides.
Thus, in the calms of life, we only see
A steadier image of our misery;
But lively gales and gently clouded skies
Disperse the sad reflections as they rise;

And busy thoughts and little cares avail
To ease the mind, when rest and reason fail.
When the dull thought, by no designs employ'd,
Dwells on the past or suffer'd or enjoy'd,
We bleed anew in every former grief
And joys departed furnish no relief.
Not Hope herself, with all her flattering art,
Can cure this stubborn sickness of the heart:
The soul disdains each comfort she prepares,
And anxious searches for congenial cares;
Those lenient cares, which, with our own combined,
By mix'd sensations ease th' afflicted mind,
And steal our grief away, and leave their own behind
A lighter grief! which feeling hearts endure
Without regret, nor e'en demand a cure.
But what strange art, what magic can dispose
The troubled mind to change its native woes?
Or lead us willing from ourselves, to see
Others more wretched, more undone than we?
This, Books can do;—nor this alone; they give
New views to life, and teach us how to live;
They soothe the grieved, the stubborn they chastise,
Fools they admonish, and confirm the wise:
Their aid they yield to all: they never shun
The man of sorrow, nor the wretch undone:
Unlike the hard, the selfish, and the proud,
They fly not sullen from the suppliant crowd;
Nor tell to various people various things,
But show to subjects, what they show to kings.
Come, Child of Care, to make thy soul serene
Approach the treasures of this tranquil scene·
Survey the dome, and, as the doors unfold,
The soul's best cure, in all her cares, behold!
Where mental wealth the poor in thought may find
And mental physic the diseased in mind:
See here the balms that passion's wounds assuage;
See coolers here, that damp the fire of rage,
Here alt'ratives, by slow degrees control
The chronic habits of the sickly soul
And round the heart and o'er the aching head,
Mild opiates here their sober influence shed.
Now bid thy soul man's busy scenes exclude,
And view composed this silent multitude:—
Silent they are—but, though deprived of sound,
Here all the living languages abound·
Here all that live no more; preserved they lie,
In tombs that open to the curious eye.
Blest be the gracious Power, who taught mankind
To stamp a last'ing image of the mind!

Beasts may convey, and tuneful birds may sing,
Their mutual feelings, in the opening spring;
But Man alone has skill and power to send
The heart's warm dictates to the distant friend;
'Tis his alone to please, instruct, advise
Ages remote, and nations yet to rise.
In sweet repose, when Labour's children sleep,
When Joy forgets to smile and Care to weep,
When Passion slumbers in the lover's breast,
And Fear and Guilt partake the balm of rest,
Why then denies the studious man to share
Man's common good, who feels his common care?
Because the hope is his, that bids him fly
Night's soft repose, and sleep's mild power defy,
That after-ages may repeat his praise,
And fame's fair meed be his, for length of days.
Delightful prospect! when we leave behind
A worthy offspring of the fruitful mind!
Which, born and nursed through many an anxious day
Shall all our labour, all our care repay.
Yet all are not these births of noble kind,
Not all the children of a vigorous mind:
Not where the wisest should alone preside,
The weak would rule us, and the blind would guide,
Nay, man's best efforts taste of man, and show
The poor and troubled source from which they flow:
Where most he triumphs, we his wants perceive,
And for his weakness in his wisdom grieve.
But though imperfect all; yet wisdom loves
This seat serene, and virtue's self approves.—
Here come the grieved, a change of thought to find,
The curious here to feed a craving mind:
Here the devout their peaceful temple choose;
And here the poet meets his favouring muse.
With awe, around these silent walks I tread;
These are the lasting mansions of the dead:—
"The dead!" methinks a thousand tongues reply;
"These are the tombs of such as cannot die!
Crown'd with eternal fame, they sit sublime,
And laugh at all the little strife of time."
Hail, then, immortals! ye who shine above,
Each, in his sphere, the literary Jove;
And ye the common people of these skies,
A humbler crowd of nameless deities;
Whether 'tis yours to lead the willing mind
Through History's mazes, and the turnings find,
Or whether, led by Science, ye retire,
Lost and bewilder'd in the vast desire;

Whether the Muse invites you to her bowers,
And crown your placid brows with living flowers
Or godlike wisdom teaches you to show
The noblest road to happiness below;
Or men and manners prompt the easy page
To mark the flying follies of the age;
Whatever good ye boast, that good impart
Inform the head and rectify the heart.

Lo, all in silence, all in order stand,
And mighty folios first, a lordly band;
Then quartos their well-order'd ranks maintain,
And light octavos fill a spacious plain:
See yonder, ranged in more frequented rows,
A humbler band of duodecimos;
While undistinguished trifles swell the scene,
The last new play and fritter'd magazine.
Thus 'tis in life, where first the proud, the great
In leagued assembly keep their cumbrous state,
Heavy and huge, they fill the world with dread,
Are much admired, and are but little read:
The commons next, a middle rank, are found;
Professions fruitful pour their offspring round;
Reasoners and wits are next their place allow'd,
And last, of vulgar tribes a countless crowd.

First, let us view the form, the size, the dress;
For these the manners, nay the mind express;
That weight of wood, with leathern coat o'erlaid;
Those ample clasps, of solid metal made;
The close-press'd leaves, unclosed for many an age;
The dull red edging of the well-fill'd page;
On the broad back the stubborn ridges roll'd
Where yet the title stands in tarnish'd gold;
These all a sage and labour'd work proclaim,
A painful candidate for lasting fame:
No idle wit, no trifling verse can lurk
In the deep bosom of that weighty work:
No playful thoughts degrade the solemn style,
Nor one light sentence claims a transient smile.

Hence in these times, untouch'd the pages lie
And slumber out their immortality:
They *had* their day, when, after all his toil,
His morning study, and his midnight oil,
At length an author's ONE great work appear'd,
By patient hope, and length of days endear'd:
Expecting nations hail'd it from the press;
Poetic friends prefix'd each kind address;
Princes and kings received the pond'rous gift,
And ladies read the work they could not lift.

Fashion, though Folly's child, and guide of fools,
Rules e'en the wisest, and in learning rules:
From crowds and courts to Wisdom's seat she goes
And reigns triumphant o'er her mother's foes.
For lo! these fav'rites of the ancient mode
Lie all neglected like the Birthday Ode.

Ah! needless now this weight of massy chain;
Safe in themselves, the once-loved works remain;
No readers now invade their still retreat,
None try to steal them from their parent-seat;
Like ancient beauties, they may now discard
Chains, bolts, and locks, and lie without a guard.

Our patient fathers trifling themes laid by,
And roll'd, o'er labour'd works, th' attentive eye:
Page after page, the much-enduring men
Explor'd, the deeps and shallows of the pen;
Till, every former note and comment known,
They mark'd the spacious margin with their own:
Minute corrections proved their studious care;
The little index, pointing, told us where:
And many an emendation show'd the age
Look'd far beyond the rubric title-page.

Our nicer palates lighter labours seek,
Cloy'd with a folio-*Number* once a week:
Bibles, with cuts and comments, thus go down:
E'en light Voltaire is *number'd* through the town:
Thus physic flies abroad, and thus the law,
From men of study, and from men of straw;
Abstracts, abridgments, please the fickle times,
Pamphlets and plays, and politics and rhymes:
But though to write be now a task of ease,
The task is hard by manly arts to please,
When all our weakness is exposed to view,
And half our judges are our rivals too.

Amid these works on which the eager eye
Delights to fix, or glides reluctant by,
When all combined, their decent pomp display,
Where shall we first our early offering pay?—
To thee, DIVINITY! to thee, the light
And guide of mortals, through their mental night;
By whom we learn our hopes and fears to guide;
To bear with pain, and to contend with pride:
When grieved, to pray; when injured, to forgive:
And with the world in charity to live.

Not truths like these inspired that numerous race
Whose pious labours fill this ample space;
But questions nice, where doubt on doubt arose,
Awaked to war the long contending foes.

For dubious meanings, learn'd polemics strove,
And wars on faith prevented works of love;
The brands of discord far around were hurl'd,
And holy wrath inflamed a sinful world:—
Dull though impatient, peevish though devout,
With wit disgusting, and despised without;
Saints in design, in execution men,
Peace in their looks, and vengeance in their pen.
Methinks I see, and sicken at the sight,
Spirits of spleen from yonder pile alight;
Spirits who prompted every damning page,
With pontiff pride and still-increasing rage:
Lo! how they stretch their gloomy wings aronnd
And lash with furious strokes the trembling ground!
They pray, they fight, they murder, and they weep,—
Wolves in their vengeance, in their manners sheep;
Too well they act the prophet's fatal part,
Denouncing evil with a zealous heart;
And each, like Jonah, is displeased if God
Repent his anger, or withhold his rod.
But here the dormant fury rests unsonght,
And Zeal sleeps soundly by the foes she fought;
Here all the rage of controversy ends,
And rival zealots rest like bosom-friends:
An Athanasian here, in deep repose,
Sleeps with the fiercest of his Arian foes,
Socinians here with Calvinists abide,
And thin partitions angry chiefs divide;
Here wily Jesuits simple Quakers meet,
And Bellarmine has rest at Luther's feet.
Great authors, for the church's glory fired,
Are for the church's peace, to rest retired;
And close beside, a mystic, maudlin race,
Lie "Crumbs of Comfort for the Babes of Grace."
Against her foes Religion well defends
Her sacred truths, but often fears her friends;
If learn'd, their pride, if weak, their zeal she dreads,
And their hearts' weakness, who have soundest heads:
But most she fears the controversial pen,
The holy strife of disputatious men:
Who the blest Gospel's peaceful page explore,
Only to fight against its precepts more.
Near to these seats, behold yon slender frames,
All closely fill'd and mark'd with modern names;
Where no fair science ever shows her face,
Few sparks of genius, and no spark of grace:
There sceptics rest, a still-increasing throng.
And stretch their widening wings ten thousand strong:

Some in close fight their dubious claims maintain;
Some skirmish lightly, fly and fight again;
Coldly profane, and impiously gay
Their end the same, though various in their way.
When first Religion came to bless the land,
Her friends were then a firm believing band,
To doubt was then to plunge in guilt extreme,
And all was gospel that a monk could dream;
Insulted Reason fled the grov'ling soul,
For Fear to guide, and visions to control:
But now, when Reason has assumed her throne,
She, in her turn demands to reign alone;
Rejecting all that lies beyond her view,
And, being judge, will be a witness too:
Insulted Faith then leaves the doubtful mind,
To seek the truth, without a power to find.
Ah! when will both in friendly beams unite,
And pour on erring man resistless light?
Next to the seats, well stored with works divine,
An ample space, PHILOSOPHY! is thine,
Our reason's guide, by whose assisting light
We trace the moral bounds of wrong and right;
Our guide through nature, from the sterile clay
To the bright orbs of yon celestial way!
'T is thine, the great, the golden chain to trace,
Which runs through all, connecting race with race:
Save where those puzzling, stubborn links remain
Which thy inferior light pursues in vain:—
How vice and virtue in the soul contend;
How widely differ, yet how nearly blend;
What various passions war on either part,
And now confirm, now melt the yielding heart:
How Fancy loves around the world to stray,
While Judgment slowly picks his sober way;
The stores of memory, and the flights sublime
Of genius, bound by neither space nor time;—
All these divine Philosophy explores.
Till, lost in awe, she wonder and adores.
From these, descending to the earth, she turns,
And matter, in its various form, discerns:
She parts the beamy light with skill profound,
Metes the thin air, and weighs the flying sound;
'T is hers the lightning from the clouds to call,
And teach the fiery mischief where to fall.
Yet more her volumes teach.—on these we look
As abstracts drawn from Nature's larger book:
Here, first described, the torpid earth appears
And next the vegetable robe it wears:

Where flow'ry tribes, in valleys, fields, and groves,
Nurse the still flame, and feed the silent loves;
Loves, where no grief, nor joy, nor bliss, nor pain,
Warm the glad heart or vex the labouring brain;
But as the green blood moves along the blade,
The bed of Flora on the branch is made:
Where, without passion, love instinctive lives,
And gives new life, unconscious that it gives.
Advancing still in Nature's maze, we trace,
In dens and burning plains, her savage race;
With those tame tribes who on their lord attend,
And find, in man, a master and a friend;
Man crowns the scene, a world of wonders new,
A moral world, that well demands our view.

This world is here: for, of more lofty kind,
These neighbouring volumes reason on the mind;
They paint the state of man ere yet endued
With knowledge;—man, poor, ignorant, and rude
Then, as his state improves, their pages swell,
And all its cares, and all its comforts, tell:
Here we behold how inexperience buys,
At little price, the wisdom of the wise;
Without the troubles of an active state,
Without the cares and dangers of the great,
Without the miseries of the poor, we know
What wisdom, wealth, and poverty bestow;
We see how reason calms the raging mind,
And how contending passions urge mankind:
Some, won by virtue, glow with sacred fire;
Some, lured by vice, indulge the low desire;
Whilst others, won by either, now pursue
The guilty chase, now keep the good in view;
For ever wretched, with themselves at strife,
They lead a puzzled, vex'd uncertain life;
For transient vice bequeaths a lingering pain,
Which transient virtue seeks to cure in vain.

Whilst thus engaged, high views enlarge the soul,
New interests draw, new principles control:
Nor thus the soul alone resigns her grief,
But here the tortured body finds relief;
For see where yonder sage Arachné shapes
Her subtle gin, that not a fly escapes!
There Physic fills the space, and far around,
Pile above pile her learned works abound:
Glorious their aim—to ease the labouring heart;
To war with death, and stop his flying dart;
To trace the source whence the fierce contest grew
And life's short lease on easier terms renew;

To calm the phrensy of the burning brain,
To heal the tortures of imploring pain:
Or, when more powerful ills all efforts brave,
To ease the victim no device can save,
And smooth the stormy passage to the grave.
But man, who knows no good unmix'd and pure,
Oft finds a poison where he sought a cure;
For grave deceivers lodge their labours here,
And cloud the science they pretend to clear:
Scourges for sin, the solemn tribe are sent;
Like fire and storms, they call us to repent;
But storms subside, and fires forget to rage.
These are eternal scourges of the age:
'T is not enough that each terrific hand
Spreads desolation round a guilty land;
But train'd to ill, and harden'd by its crimes,
Their pen relentless kills through future times,
Say ye, who search these records of the dead—
Who read huge works, to boast what ye have read,
Call all the real knowledge ye possess,
Or those—if such there are—who more than guess,
Atone for each impostor's wild mistakes,
And mend the blunders pride and folly makes
What thought so wild, what airy dream so light
That will not prompt a theorist to write?
What art so prevalent, what proof so strong,
That will convince him his attempt is wrong?
One in the solids finds each lurking ill,
Nor grants the passive fluids power to kill·
A learned friend some subtler reason brings,
Absolves the channels, but condemns their springs;
The subtle nerves, that shun the doctor's eye,
Escape no more his subtler theory
The vital heat, that warms the labouring heart,
Lends a fair system to these sons of art;
The vital air, a pure and subtle stream,
Serves a foundation for an airy scheme,
Assists the doctor, and supports his dream.
Some have their favourite ills, and each disease
Is but a younger branch that kills from these:
One to the gout contracts all human pain;
He views it raging in the frantic brain;
Finds it in fevers all his efforts mar,
And sees it lurking in the cold catarrh:
Bilious by some, by others nervous seen,
Rage the fantastic demons of the spleen;
And every symptom of the strange disease
With every system of the sage agrees.

Ye frigid tribe, on whom I wasted long
The tedious hours, and ne'er indulged in song;
Ye first seducers of my easy heart,
Who promised knowledge ye could not impart,
Ye dull deluders, truth's destructive foes;
Ye sons of fiction, clad in stupid prose;
Ye treacherous leaders, who, yourselves in doubt,
Light up false fires, and send us far about:—
Still may yon spider round your pages spin
Subtle and slow, her emblematic gin!
Buried in dust and lost in silence, dwell,
Most potent, grave, and reverend friends—farewell!

Near these, and where the setting sun displays,
Through the dim window, his departing rays,
And gilds yon columns, there, on either side,
The huge Abridgments of the LAW abide;
Fruitful as vice the dread correctors stand,
And spread their guardian terrors round the land;
Yet, as the best that human care can do,
Is mix'd with error, oft with evil too,
Skill'd in deceit, and practised to evade,
Knaves stand secure, for whom these laws were made
And justice vainly each expedient tries,
While art eludes it, or while power defies.
"Ah! happy age," the youthful poet sings,
When the free nations knew not laws nor kings;
When all were blest to share a common store,
And none were proud of wealth, for none were poor
No wars nor tumults vex'd each still domain,
No thirst of empire, no desire of gain;
No proud great man, nor one who would be great,
Drove modest merit from its proper state;
Nor into distant climes would Avarice roam,
To fetch delights for Luxury at home:
Bound by no ties which kept the soul in awe,
They dwelt at liberty, and love was law!"

"Mistaken youth! each nation first was rude,
Each man a cheerless son of solitude,
To whom no joys of social life were known,
None felt a care that was not all his own;
Or in some languid clime his abject soul
Bow'd to a little tyrant's stern control;
A slave, with slaves his monarch's throne he raised,
And in rude song his ruder idol praised;
The meaner cares of life were all he knew;
Bounded his pleasures, and his wishes few:
But when by slow degrees the Arts arose,
And Science waken'd from her long repose;

When Commerce, rising from the bed of ease
Ran round the land, and pointed to the seas;
When Emulation, born with jealous eye,
And Avarice, lent their spurs to industry;
Then one by one the numerous laws were made,
Those to control, and these to succour trade:
To curb the insolence of rude command,
To snatch the victim from the usurer's hand;
To awe the bold, to yield the wrong'd redress,
And feed the poor with Luxury's excess."

Like some vast flood, unbounded, fierce, and strong,
His nature leads ungovern'd man along;
Like mighty bulwarks made to stem that tide,
The laws are form'd, and placed on ev'ry side:
Whene'er it breaks the bounds by these decreed,
New statutes rise, and stronger laws succeed:
More and more gentle grows the dying stream,
More and more strong the rising bulwarks seem;
Till, like a miner working sure and slow,
Luxury creeps on, and ruins all below;
The basis sinks, the ample piles decay:
The stately fabric shakes and falls away;
Primeval want and ignorance come on,
But Freedom, that exalts the savage state, is gone.

Next, HISTORY ranks:—there full in front she lies,
And every nation her dread tale supplies:
Yet History has her doubts, and every age
With sceptic queries marks the passing page;
Records of old nor later date are clear,
Too distant those, and these are placed too near;
There time conceals the objects from our view,
Here our own passions and a writer's too:
Yet, in these volumes, see how states arose!
Guarded by virtue from surrounding foes,
Their virtue lost, and of their triumphs vain,
Lo! how they sunk to slavery again!
Satiate with power, of fame and wealth possess'd,
A nation grows too glorious to be blest;
Conspicuous made, she stands the mark of all,
And foes join foes to triumph in her fall.

Thus speaks the page that paints ambition's race,
The monarch's pride, his glory, his disgrace;
The headlong course, that madd'ning heroes run,
How soon triumphant, and how soon undone;
How slaves, turn'd tyrants, offer crowns to sale,
And each fall'n nation's melancholy tale.

Lo! where of late the Book of Martyrs stood
Old pious tracts, and Bibles bound in wood.

There, such the taste of our degenerate age,
Stand the profane delusions of the STAGE:
Yet virtue owns the TRAGIC MUSE a friend,
Fable her means, morality her end;
For this she rules all passions in their turns,
And now the bosom bleeds, and now it burns;
Pity with weeping eye surveys her bowl,
Her anger swells, her terror chills the soul;
She makes the vile to virtue yield applause,
And own her sceptre while they break her laws.
For vice in others is abhorr'd of all,
And villains triumph when the worthless fall.

Not thus her sister COMEDY prevails,
Who shoots at Folly, for her arrow fails;
Folly, by Dulness arm'd, eludes the wound,
And harmless sees the feather'd shafts rebound;
Unhurt she stands, applauds the archer's skill,
Laughs at her malice, and is Folly still.
Yet well the Muse portrays, in fancied scenes,
What pride will stoop to, what profession means
How formal fools the farce of state applaud;
How caution watches at the lips of fraud;
The wordy variance of domestic life;
The tyrant husband, the retorting wife;
The snares for innocence, the lie of trade,
And the smooth tongue's habitual masquerade

With her the Virtues too obtain a place,
Each gentle passion, each becoming grace:
The social joy in life's securer road,
Its easy pleasure, its substantial good:
The happy thought that conscious virtue gives,
And all that ought to live, and all that lives.

But who are these? Methinks a noble mien
And awful grandeur in their form are seen,
Now in disgrace: what though by time is spread
Polluting dust o'er every reverend head;
What though beneath yon gilded tribe they lie,
And dull observers pass insulting by:
Forbid it shame, forbid it decent awe,
What seems so grave, should no attention draw!
Come, let us then with reverend step advance,
And greet—the ancient worthies of ROMANCE.

Hence, ye profane! I feel a former dread,
A thousand visions float around my head:
Hark! hollow blasts through empty courts resound
And shadowy forms with staring eyes stalk round,
See! moats and bridges, walls and castles rise,
Ghosts, fairies, demons, dance before our eyes.

O! magic verse inscribed on golden gate,
And bloody hand that beckons on to fate:—
"And who art thou, thou little page, unfold?
Say, doth my lord my Claribel withhold?
Go tell him straight, Sir Knight, thou must not 1
The captive queen;—for Claribel is mine."
Away he flies; and now for bloody deeds,
Black suits of armour, masks, and foaming steeds;
The giant falls; his recreant throat I seize,
And from his corset take the massy keys:—
Dukes, lords, and knights in long procession move,
Released from bondage with my virgin love:—
She comes! she comes! in all the charms of youth
Unequall'd love and unsuspected truth!

Ah happy he who thus, in magic themes,
O'er worlds bewitch'd, in early rapture dreams,
Where wild Enchantment waves her potent wand,
And Fancy's beauties fill her fairy land;
Where doubtful objects strange desires excite,
And Fear and Ignorance afford delight.

But lost, for ever lost, to me these joys,
Which Reason scatters, and which Time destroys,
Too dearly bought. maturer judgment calls
My busied mind from tales and madrigals;
My doughty giants all are slain or fled,
And all my knights—blue, green, and yellow—dead!
No more the midnight fairy tribe I view,
All in the merry moonshine tippling dew;
E'en the last lingering notion of the brain,
The churchyard ghost, is now at rest again;
And all these wayward wanderings of my youth
Fly Reason's power, and shun the light of Truth.

With fiction then does real joy reside,
And is our reason the delusive guide?
Is it then right to dream the syrens sing?
Or mount enraptured on the dragon's wing?
No; 'tis the infant mind, to care unknown,
That makes th' imagined paradise its own;
Soon as reflections in the bosom rise,
Light slumbers vanish, from the clouded eyes:
The tear and smile, that once together rose,
Are then divorced; the head and heart are foes:
Enchantment bows to Wisdom's serious plan,
And Pain and Prudence make and mar the man.

While thus, of power and fancied empire vain,
With various thoughts my mind I entertain;
While books, my slaves, with tyrant hand I seize,
Pleased with the pride that will not let them please;

Sudden I find terrific thoughts arise,
And sympathetic sorrow fills my eyes:
For, lo! while yet my heart admits the wound,
I see the CRITIC army ranged around,
  Foes to our race! if ever ye have known
A father's fears for offspring of your own;
If ever, smiling o'er a lucky line,
Ye thought the sudden sentiment divine,
Then paused and doubted, and then, tired of doubt,
With rage as sudden dash'd the stanza out;—
If, after fearing much and pausing long,
Ye ventured on the world your labour'd song,
And from the crusty critics of those days
Implored the feeble tribute of their praise,
Remember now the fears that moved you then,
And, spite of truth, let mercy guide your pen.
  What vent'rous race are ours! what mighty foes
Lie waiting all around them to oppose!
What treacherous friends betray them to the fight.
What dangers threaten them!—yet still they write:
A hapless tribe! to every evil born,
Whom villains hate, and fools affect to scorn:
Strangers they come, amid a world of woe,
And taste the largest portion ere they go.
  Pensive I spoke, and cast mine eyes around;
The roof, methought, return'd a solemn sound;
Each column seem'd to shake, and clouds like smoke,
From dusty piles and ancient volumes broke;
Gathering above, like mists condensed they seem,
Exhaled in summer from the rushy stream,
Like flowing robes they now appear, and twine
Round the large members of a form divine;
His silver beard, that swept his aged breast,
His piercing eye, that inward light express'd,
Were seen,—but clouds and darkness veil'd the rest.
Fear chill'd my heart: to one of mortal race,
How awful seem'd the Genius of the place!
So in Cimmerian shores, Ulysses saw
His parent-shade, and shrunk in pious awe;
Like him I stood, and wrapt in thought profound,
When from the pitying power broke forth a solemn sound:—
  "Care lives with all; no rules, no precepts save
The wise from woe, no fortitude the brave;
Grief is to man as certain as the grave:
Tempests and storms in life's whole progress rise,
And hope shines dimly through o'erclouded skies.
Some drops of comfort on the favour'd fall,
But showers of sorrow are the lot of *all:*

Partial to talents, then, shall Heav'n withdraw
Th' afflicting rod, or break the general law?
Shall he who soars, inspired by loftier views,
Life's little cares and little pains refuse?
Shall he not rather feel a double share
Of mortal woe, when doubly arm'd to bear?
" Hard is his fate who builds his peace of mind
On the precarious mercy of mankind;
Who hopes for wild and visionary things,
And mounts o'er unknown seas with vent'rous wings:
But as, of various evils that befall
The human race, some portion goes to all;
To him perhaps the milder lot's assign'd,
Who feels his consolation in his mind;
And lock'd within his bosom, bears about
A mental charm for every care without.
E'en in the pangs of each domestic grief,
Or health or vigorous hope affords relief;
And every wound the tortured bosom feels,
Or virtue bears, or some preserver heals:
Some generous friend, of ample power possess'd;
Some feeling heart, that bleeds for the distress'd,
Some breast that glows with virtues all divine;
Some noble RUTLAND, misery's friend and thine.
" Nor say, the Muse's song, the Poet's pen,
Merit the scorn they meet from little men.
With cautious freedom if the numbers flow,
Not wildly high, nor pitifully low;
If vice alone their honest aims oppose,
Why so ashamed their friends, so loud their foes?
Happy for men in every age and clime,
If all the sons of vision dealt in rhyme.
Go on, then, Son of Vision! still pursue
Thy airy dreams; the world is dreaming too.
Ambition's lofty views, the pomp of state,
The pride of wealth, the splendour of the great,
Stripp'd of their mask, their cares and troubles known,
Are visions far less happy than thy own:
Go on! and, while the sons of care complain,
Be wisely gay and innocently vain;
While serious souls are by their fears undone,
Blow sportive bladders in the beamy sun.
And call them worlds! and bid the greatest show
More radiant colours in their worlds below:
Then, as they break, the slaves of care reprove,
And tell them Such are all the toys they love."

THE VILLAGE.

IN TWO BOOKS.

The Subject proposed—Remarks upon Pastoral Poetry—A Tract of Country near the Coast described—An impoverished Borough—Smugglers and their Assistants—Rude Manners of the Inhabitants—Ruinous Effects of a high Tide—The Village Life more generally considered: Evils of it—The youthful Labourer—The old Man: his Soliloquy—The Parish Workhouse: its Inhabitants—the sick Poor: their Apothecary—The dying Pauper—The Village Priest.

BOOK I.

THE Village Life, and every care that reigns
O'er youthful peasants and declining swains;
What labour yields, and what, that labour past,
Age, in its hour of languor, finds at last;
What form the real Picture of the Poor,
Demand a song—the Muse can give no more.
  Fled are those times, when, in harmonious strains,
The rustic poet praised his native plains:
No shepherds now, in smooth alternate verse,
Their country's beauty or their nymphs' rehearse;
Yet still for these we frame the tender strain,
Still in our lays fond Corydons complain,
And shepherds' boys their amorous pains reveal,
The only pains alas! they never feel.
  On Mincio's banks, in Cæsar's bounteous reign,
If Tityrus found the Golden Age again,
Must sleepy bards the flattering dream prolong,
Mechanic echoes of the Mantuan song?
From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,
Where Virgil, not where Fancy, leads the way?
  Yes, thus the Muses sing of happy swains,
Because the Muses never knew their pains:
They boast their peasants' pipes; but peasants now
Resign their pipes and plod behind the plough;
And few, amid the rural-tribe, have time
To number syllables, and play with rhyme;

Save honest DUCK, what son of verse could share
The poet's rapture and the peasant's care?
Or the great labours of the field degrade,
With the new peril of a poorer trade?

From this chief cause these idle praises spring,
That themes so easy few forbear to sing;
For no deep thought the trifling subjects ask;
To sing of shepherds is an easy task:
The happy youth assumes the common strain,
A nymph his mistress, and himself a swain;
With no sad scenes he clouds his tuneful prayer,
But all, to look like her, is painted fair.

I grant indeed that fields and flocks have charms
For him that grazes or for him that farms;
But when amid such pleasing scenes I trace
The poor laborious natives of the place,
And see the mid-day sun, with fervid ray,
On their bare heads and dewy temples play;
While some, with feebler heads and fainter hearts,
Deplore their fortune, yet sustain their parts—
Then shall I dare these real ills to hide
In tinsel trappings of poetic pride?

No; cast by Fortune on a frowning coast,
Which neither groves nor happy valleys boast;
Where other cares than those the Muse relates,
And other shepherds dwell with other mates;
But such examples taught, I paint the Cot,
As Truth will paint it, and as Bards will not:
Nor you, ye Poor, of letter'd scorn complain,
To you the smoothest song is smooth in vain;
O'ercome by labour, and bow'd down by time,
Feel you the barren flattery of a rhyme?
Can poets soothe you, when you pine for bread,
By winding myrtles round your ruin'd shed?
Can their light tales your weighty griefs o'erpower,
Or glad with airy mirth the toilsome hour?

Lo! where the heath, with withering brake grown o'er,
Lends the light turf that warms the neighbouring poor;
From thence a length of burning sand appears,
Where the thin harvest waves its wither'd ears;
Rank weeds, that every art and care defy
Reign'd o'er the land, and rob the blighted rye.
There thistles stretch their prickly arms afar,
And to the ragged infant threaten war:
There poppies nodding, mock the hope of toil;
There the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil;
Hardy and high, above the slender sheaf,
The slimy mallow waves her silky leaf;

O'er the young shoot the charlock throws a shade,
And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade;
With mingled tints the rocky coast abound,
And a sad splendour vainly shines around.
So looks the nymph whom wretched arts adorn,
Betray'd by man, then left for man to scorn;
Whose cheek in vain assumes the mimic rose,
While her sad eyes the troubled breast disclose;
Whose outward splendour is but folly's dress,
Exposing most, when most it gilds distress.
Here joyless roam a wild amphibious race,
With sullen woe display'd in every face;
Who, far from civil arts and social fly,
And scowl at strangers with suspicious eye.
Here too the lawless merchant of the main
Draws from his plough th' intoxicated swain;
Want only claim'd the labour of the day,
But vice now steals his nightly rest away.
Where are the swains, who, daily labour done,
With rural games play'd down the setting sun;
Who struck with matchless force the bounding ball,
Or made the pond'rous quoit obliquely fall;
While some huge Ajax, terrible and strong,
Engaged some artful stripling of the throng,
And fell beneath him, foil'd, while far around
Hoarse triumph rose, and rocks return'd the sound? 100
Where now are these?—Beneath yon cliff they stand,
To show the freighted pinnace where to land;
To load the ready steed with guilty haste,
To fly in terror o'er the pathless waste,
Or, when detected, in their straggling course,
To foil their foes by cunning or by force;
Or, yielding part (which equal knaves demand),
To gain a lawless passport through the land.
Here, wand'ring long, amid these frowning fields,
I sought the simple life that Nature yields;
Rapine and Wrong and Fear usurp'd her place,
And a bold, artful, surly, savage race;
Who, only skill'd to take the finny tribe
The yearly dinner, or septennial bribe,
Wait on the shore, and as the waves run high,
On the tost vessel bend their eager eye,
Which to their coast directs its vent rous way;
Theirs, or the ocean's, miserable prey.
As on their neighbouring beach yon swallows stand,
And wait for favouring winds to leave the land;
While still for flight the ready wing is spread:
So waited I the favouring hour and fled:

Fled from these shores where guilt and famine reign,
And cried, Ah! hapless they who still remain;
Who still remain to hear the ocean roar,
Whose greeny waves devour the lessening shore;
Till some fierce tide, with more imperious sway,
Sweeps the low hut and all it holds away;
When the sad tenant weeps from door to door;
And begs a poor protection from the poor!

But these are scenes where Nature's niggard hand
Gave a spare portion to the famish'd land;
Her's is the fault, if here mankind complain
Of fruitless toil and labour spent in vain;
But yet in other scenes more fair in view,
When Plenty smiles—alas! she smiles for few—
And those who taste not, yet behold her store,
Are as the slaves that dig the golden ore—
The wealth around them makes them doubly poor.

Or will you deem them amply paid in health,
Labour's fair child, that languishes with wealth?
Go then! and see them rising with the sun,
Through a long course of daily toil to run;
See them beneath the dog-star's raging heat,
When the knees tremble and the temples beat;
Behold them, leaning on their scythes, look o'er
The labour past, and toils to come explore;
See them alternate suns and showers engage,
And hoard up aches and anguish for their age;
Through fens and marshy moors their steps pursue
When their warm pores imbibe the evening dew;
Then own that labour may as fatal be
To these thy slaves, as thine excess to thee.

Amid this tribe too oft a manly pride
Strives in strong toil the fainting heart to hide
There may you see the youth of slender frame
Contend with weakness, weariness, and shame,
Yet urged along, and proudly loth to yield,
He strives to join his fellows of the field:
Till long-contending nature droops at last,
Declining health rejects his poor repast,
His cheerless spouse the coming danger sees
And mutual murmurs urge the slow disease.

Yet grant them health, 'tis not for us to tell,
Though the head droops not, that the heart is well,
Or will you praise that homely, healthy fare,
Plenteous and plain, that happy peasants share!
Oh! trifle not with wants you cannot feel,
Nor mock the misery of a stinted meal;
Homely, not wholesome, plain, not plenteous, such
As you who praise would never deign to touch

Ye gentle souls, who dream of rural ease,
Whom the smooth stream and smoother sonnet please,
Go! if the peaceful cot your praises share,
Go look within, and ask if peace be there;
If peace be his—that drooping weary sire,
Or theirs, that offspring round their feeble fire;
Or hers, that matron pale, whose trembling hand
Turns on the wretched hearth th' expiring brand!

Nor yet can Time itself obtain for these
Life's latest comforts, due respect and ease:
For yonder see that hoary swain, whose age
Can with no cares except its own engage;
Who, propt on that rude staff, looks up to see
The bare arms broken from the withering tree,
On which, a boy, he climb'd the loftiest bough,
Then his first joy, but his sad emblem now.

He once was chief in all the rustic trade;
His steady hand the straightest furrow made;
Full many a prize he won, and still is proud
To find the triumphs of his youth allow'd;
A transient pleasure sparkles in his eyes,
He hears and smiles, then thinks again and sighs:
For now he journeys to his grave in pain;
The rich disdain him; nay, the poor disdain:
Alternate masters now their slave command,
Urge the weak efforts of his feeble hand,
And, when his age attempts its task in vain,
With ruthless taunts, of lazy poor complain.

Oft may you see him, when he tends the sheep,
His winter charge, beneath the hillock weep;
Oft hear him murmur to the winds that blow
O'er his white locks and bury them in snow,
When, roused by rage and muttering in the morn
He mends the broken hedge with icy thorn:—

"Why do I live, when I desire to be
At once from life and life's long labour free?
Like leaves in spring, the young are blown away,
Without the sorrows of a slow decay;
I, like yon wither'd leaf, remain behind,
Nipt by the frost, and shivering in the wind;
There it abides till younger buds come on,
As I, now all my fellow-swains are gone;
Then, from the rising generation thrust,
It falls, like me, unnoticed to the dust.

"These fruitful fields, these numerous flocks I see,
Are others' gain, but killing cares to me;
To me the children of my youth are lords,
Cool in their looks, but hasty in their words:

Wants of their own demand their care; and who
Feels his own want and succours others too?
A lonely, wretched man, in pain I go,
None need my help, and none relieve my woe;
Then let my bones beneath the turf be laid,
And men forget the wretch they would not aid."
Thus groan the old, till by disease oppress'd,
They taste a final woe, and then they rest.
Theirs is yon House that holds the parish poor,
Whose walls of mud scarce bear the broken door;
There, where the putrid vapours, flagging, play,
And the dull wheel hums doleful through the day;—
There children dwell who know no parent's care;
Parents, who know no children's love, dwell there!
Heart-broken matrons on their joyless bed,
Forsaken wives, and mothers never wed
Dejected widows with unheeded tears,
And crippled age with more than childhood fears:
The lame, the blind, and, far the happiest they!
The moping idiot, and the madman gay.
Here too the sick their final doom receive,
Here brought, amid the scenes of grief, to grieve,
Where the loud groans from some sad chamber flow
Mixt with the clamours of the crowd below;
Here, sorrowing, they each kindred sorrow scan,
And the cold charities of man to man:
Whose laws indeed for ruin'd age provide,
And strong compulsion plucks the scrap from pride.
But still that scrap is bought with many a sigh,
And pride embitters what it can't deny.
Say, ye, oppress by some fantastic woes,
Some jarring nerve that baffles your repose;
Who press the downy couch, while slaves advance
With timid eye to read the distant glance;
Who with sad prayers the weary doctor tease,
To name the nameless ever-new disease;
Who with mock patience dire complaints endure,
Which real pain and that alone can cure;
How would ye bear in real pain to lie,
Despised, neglected, left alone to die?
How would ye bear to draw your latest breath,
Where all that's wretched paves the way for death?
Such is that room which one rude beam divides,
And naked rafters form the sloping sides;
Where the vile bands that bind the thatch are seen,
And lath and mud are all that lie between;
Save one dull pane, that, coarsely patch'd, gives way
To the rude tempest, yet excludes the day:

Here, on a matted flock, with dust o'erspread,
The drooping wretch reclines his languid head,
For him no hand the cordial cup applies
Or wipes the tear that stagnates in his eyes;
No friends with soft discourse his pain beguile,
Or promise hope, till sickness wears a smile.
But soon a loud and hasty summons calls,
Shakes the thin roof, and echoes round the walls;
Anon, a figure enters, quaintly neat,
All pride and business, bustle and conceit;
With looks unalter'd by these scenes of woe,
With speed that, entering, speaks his haste to go,
He bids the gazing throng around him fly,
And carries fate and physic in his eye:
A potent quack, long versed in human ills,
Who first insults the victim whom he kills;
Whose murd'rous hand a drowsy Bench protect,
And whose most tender mercy is neglect.
Paid by the parish for attendance here,
He wears contempt upon his sapient sneer;
In haste he seeks the bed where Misery lies,
Impatience mark'd in his averted eyes;
And, some habitual queries hurried o er,
Without reply, he rushes on the door:
His drooping patient, long inured to pain,
And long unheeded, knows remonstrance vain;
He ceases now the feeble help to crave
Of man; and silent sinks into the grave.
But ere his death some pious doubts arise,
Some simple fears, which "bold bad" men despise
Fain would he ask the parish priest to prove
His title certain to the joys above:
For this he sends the murmuring nurse, who calls
The holy stranger to these dismal walls:
And doth not he, the pious man, appear,
He, "passing rich with forty pounds a year?"
Ah! no; a shepherd of a different stock,
And far unlike him, feeds this little flock:
A jovial youth, who thinks his Sunday's task
As much as God or man can fairly ask:
The rest he gives to loves and labours light,
To fields the morning, and to feasts the night;
None better skill'd the noisy pack to guide,
To urge their chase, to cheer them or to chide;
A sportsman keen, he shoots through half the day
And, skill'd at whist, devotes the night to play:
Then, while such honours bloom around his head,
Shall he sit sadly by the sick man's bed,

To raise the hope he feels not, or with zeal
To combat fears that e'en the pious feel?
Now once again the gloomy scene explore,
Less gloomy now; the bitter hour is o er,
The man of many sorrows sighs no more.—
Up yonder hill, behold how sadly slow
The bier moves winding from the vale below:
There lie the happy dead, from trouble free,
And the glad parish pays the frugal fee:
No more, O Death! thy victim starts to hear
Churchwarden stern, or kingly overseer;
No more the farmer claims his humble bow,
Thou art his lord, the best of tyrants thou!
Now to the church behold the mourners come
Sedately torpid and devoutly dumb:
The village children now their games suspend,
To see the bier that bears their ancient friend:
For he was one in all their idle sport,
And like a monarch ruled their little court;
The pliant bow he form'd, the flying ball,
The bat, the wicket, were his labours all;
Him now they follow to his grave, and stand,
Silent and sad, and gazing, hand in hand;
While bending low, their eager eyes explore
The mingled relics of the parish poor.
The bell tolls late, the moping owl flies round,
Fear marks the flight and magnifies the sound;
The busy priest, detain'd by weightier care,
Defers his duty till the day of prayer;
And, waiting long, the crowd retire distrest,
To think a poor man's bones should lie unblest.

BOOK II.

There are found, amid the Evils of a laborious Life, some Views of Tranquillity and Happiness—The Repose and Pleasure of a Summer Sabbath: interrupted by Intoxication and Dispute—Village Detraction—Complaints of the 'Squire—The Evening Riots—Justice—Reasons for this unpleasant View of Rustic Life: the Effect it should have upon the Lower Classes; and the Higher—These last have their peculiar Distresses: Exemplified in the Life and heroic Death of Lord Robert Manners—Concluding Address to His Grace the Duke of Rutland.

No longer truth, though shown in verse, disdain,
But own the Village Life a life of pain:
I too must yield, that oft amid these woes
Are gleams of transient mirth and hours of sweet repose,
Such as you find on yonder sportive Green,
The 'squire's tall gate and churchway-walk between;
Where loitering stray a little tribe of friends,
On a fair Sunday when the Sermon ends:
Then rural beaux their best attire put on,
To win their nymphs, as other nymphs are won,
While those long wed go plain, and by degrees,
Like other husbands, quit their care to please.
Some of the sermon talk, a sober crowd,
And loudly praise, if it were preach'd aloud:
Some on the labours of the week look round,
Feel their own worth, and think their toil renown'd;
While some, whose hopes to no renown extend,
Are only pleased to find their labours end.

Thus, as their hours glide on, with pleasure fraught
Their careful masters brood the painful thought;
Much in their mind they murmur and lament,
That one fair day should be so idly spent;
And think that Heaven deals hard, to tithe their store
And tax their time for preachers and the poor.

Yet still, ye humbler friends, enjoy your hour,
This is your portion, yet unclaim'd of power;
This is Heaven's gift to weary men oppress'd,
And seems the type of their expected rest:
But yours, alas! are joys that soon decay;
Frail joys, begun and ended with the day;
Or yet, while day permits those joys to reign,
The village vices drive them from the plain.

See the stout churl, in drunken fury great,
Strike the bare bosom of his teeming mate!

His naked vices, rude and unrefined,
Exert their open empire o'er the mind:
But can we less the senseless rage despise,
Because the savage acts without disguise?
Yet here Disguise, the city's vice, is seen,
And Slander steals along and taints the Green.
At her approach domestic peace is gone,
Domestic broils at her approach come on;
She to the wife the husband's crime conveys,
She tells the husband when his consort strays;
Her busy tongue, through all the little state,
Diffuses doubt, suspicion, and debate;
Peace, tim'rous goddess! quits her old domain,
In sentiment and long content to reign.
Nor are the nymphs that breathe the rural air
So fair as Cynthia's nor so chaste as fair:
These to the town afford each fresher face,
And the clown's trull receives the peer's embrace;
From whom, should chance again convey her down,
The peer's disease in turn attacks the clown.
Here too the 'squire, or 'squire-like farmer, talk,
How round their regions nightly pilferers walk;
How from their ponds the fish are borne, and all
The rip'ning treasures from their lofty wall;
How meaner rivals in their sports delight,
Just right enough to claim a doubtful right;
Who take a licence round their fields to stray,
A mongrel race! the poachers of the day.
And hark! the riots of the Green begin,
That sprang at first from yonder noisy inn;
What time the weekly pay was vanish'd all,
And the slow hostess scored the threat ning wall;
What time they ask'd, their friendly feast to close,
A final cup, and that will make them foes;
When blows ensue that break the arm of toil,
And rustic battle ends the boobies' broil.
Save when to yonder Hall they bend their way
Where the grave Justice ends the grievous fray;
He who recites, to keep the poor in awe,
The law's last volume—for he knows the law:—
To him with anger or with shame repair
The injured peasant and deluded fair.
Lo! at his throne the silent nymph appears,
Frail by her shape, but modest in her tears:
And while she stands abash'd, with conscious eye
Some favourite female of her judge glides by,
Who views with scornful glance the strumpet's fate,
And thanks the stars that made her keeper great:

Near her the swain, about to bear for life
One certain evil, doubts 'twixt war and wife,
But, while the falt'ring damsel takes her oath,
Consents to wed, and so secures them both.
Yet why, you ask, these humble crimes relate,
Why make the Poor as guilty as the Great?
To show the great, those mightier sons of pride,
How near in vice the lowest are allied;
Such are their natures and their passions such,
But these disguise too little, those too much:
So shall the man of power and pleasure see
In his own slave as vile a wretch as he;
In his luxurious lord the servant find
His own low pleasures and degenerate mind:
And each in all the kindred vices trace,
Of a poor, blind, bewilder'd, erring race,
Who, a short time in varied fortune past,
Die, and are equal in the dust at last.
And you, ye Poor, who still lament your fate,
Forbear to envy those you call the Great;
And know, amid those blessings they possess,
They are, like you, the victims of distress;
While Sloth with many a pang torments her slave,
Fears waits on guilt, and Danger shakes the brave.
Oh! if in life one noble chief appears,
Great in his name, while blooming in his years;
Born to enjoy whate'er delights mankind,
And yet to all you feel or fear resign'd;
Who gave up joys and hopes to you unknown,
For pains and dangers greater than your own:
If such there be, then let your murmurs cease,
Think, think of him, and take your lot in peace.
And such there was:—Oh! grief that checks our pride
Weeping we say there was,—for MANNERS died:
Beloved of Heaven, these humble lines forgive,
That sing of Thee, and thus aspire to live.
As the tall oak, whose vigorous branches form
An ample shade and brave the wildest storm,
High o'er the subject wood is seen to grow,
The guard and glory of the trees below;
Till on its head the fiery bolt descends,
And o'er the plain the shatter'd trunk extends;
Yet then it lies, all wond'rous as before,
And still the glory, though they guard no more:
So THOU, when every virtue, every grace,
Rose in thy soul, or shone within thy face;
When, though the Son of GRANBY, thou wert known
Less by thy father's glory than thy own;

When Honour loved and gave thee every charm,
Fire to thy eye and vigour to thy arm;
Then from our lofty hopes and longing eyes,
Fate and thy virtues call'd thee to the skies;
Yet still we wonder at thy tow'ring fame,
And, losing thee, still dwell upon thy name.
Oh! ever honour'd, ever valued! say,
What verse can praise thee, or what work repay?
Yet verse (in all we can) thy worth repays,
Nor trusts the tardy zeal of future days;
Honours for thee thy country shall prepare,
Thee in their hearts, the good, the brave shall bear
To deeds like thine shall noblest chiefs aspire,
The Muse shall mourn thee, and the world admire.
In future times, when smit with Glory's arms,
The untried youth first quits a father's charms;—
"Oh! be like him," the weeping sire shall say;
"Like MANNERS walk, who walk'd in Honour's way
In danger foremost, yet in death sedate,
Oh! be like him in all things, but his fate!"
If for that fate such public tears be shed,
That Victory seems to die now THOU art dead;
How shall a friend his nearer hope resign,
That friend a brother, and whose soul was thine?
By what bold lines shall we his grief express,
Or by what soothing numbers make it less?
'Tis not, I know, the chiming of a song,
Nor all the powers that to the Muse belong.
Words aptly call'd, and meanings well express'd,
Can calm the sorrows of a wounded breast;
But Virtue, soother of the fiercest pains,
Shall heal that bosom, RUTLAND, where she reigns.
Yet hard the task to heal the bleeding heart,
To bid the still recurring thoughts depart,
Tame the fierce grief and stem the rising sigh,
And curb rebellious passion, with reply;
Calmly to dwell on all that pleased before,
And yet to know that all shall please no more;—
Oh! glorious labour of the soul, to save
Her captive powers, and bravely mourn the brave.
To such these thoughts will lasting comfort give—
Life is not measured by the time we live:
'Tis not an even course of threescore years,—
A life of narrow views and paltry fears,
Grey hairs and wrinkles and the cares they bring,
That take from Death the terrors or the sting;
But 'tis the gen'rous spirit, mounting high,
Above the world, that native of the sky;

The noble spirit, that, in dangers brave,
Calmly looks on, or looks beyond the grave:—
Such MANNERS was, so he resign'd his breath,
If in a glorious, then a timely death.
  Cease then that grief, and let those tears subside,
If Passion rule us, be that passion pride;
If Reason, reason bids us strive to raise
Our fallen hearts, and be like him we praise;
Or if Affection still the soul subdue,
Bring all his virtues, all his worth in view,
And let affection find its comfort too:
For how can grief so deeply wound the heart,
When Admiration claims so large a part?
  Grief is a foe—expel him then thy soul;
Let nobler thoughts the nearer views control!
Oh! make the age to come thy better care,
See other RUTLANDS, other GRANBYS there!
And, as thy thoughts through streaming ages glide,
See other heroes die as MANNERS died:
And from their fate, thy race shall nobler grow
As trees shoot upwards that are pruned below;
Or as old Thames, borne down with decent pride,
Sees his young streams run warbling at his side;
Though some, by art cut off, no longer run,
And some are lost beneath the summer sun—
Yet the pure stream moves on, and, as it moves,
Its power increases, and its use improves;
While plenty round its spacious waves bestow,
Still it flows on, and shall for ever flow.

THE NEWSPAPER.

This not a Time favourable to poetical Composition: and why—Newspapers enemies to Literature, and their general Influence—Their Numbers—The Sunday Monitor—Their general Character—Their Effect upon Individuals—upon Society—in the Country—The Village Freeholder—What kind of Composition a Newspaper is; and the Amusement it affords—Of what Parts it is chiefly composed—Articles of Intelligence: Advertisements: The Stage: Quacks: Puffing—The Correspondents to a Newspaper, political and poetical—Advice to the latter—Conclusion.

A TIME like this, a busy, bustling time,
Suits ill with writers, very ill with rhyme:
Unheard we sing, when party-rage runs strong,
And mightier madness checks the flowing song:
Or, should we force the peaceful Muse to wield
Her feeble arms amid the furious field,
Where party-pens a wordy war maintain,
Poor is her anger, and her friendship vain;
And oft the foes who feel her sting, combine
Till serious vengeance pays an idle line:
For party-poets are like wasps, who dart
Death to themselves, and to their foes but smart.
Hard then our fate: if general themes we choose,
Neglect awaits the song, and chills the Muse;
Or should we sing the subject of the day,
To-morrow's wonder pulls our praise away.
More blest the bards of that poetic time,
When all found readers who could find a rhyme;
Green grew the bays on every teeming head,
And Cibber was enthroned, and Settle read.
Sing, drooping Muse, the cause of thy decline:
Why reign no more the once-triumphant Nine?
Alas! new charms the wavering many gain,
And rival sheets the reader's eye detain;
A daily swarm, that banish every Muse,
Come flying forth, and mortals call them NEWS.
For these, unread, the noblest volumes lie;
For these, in sheets, unsoil'd, the Muses die;
Unbought, unblest, the virgin copies wait
In vain for fame, and sink, unseen, to fate

Since then, the Town forsakes us for our foes.
The smoothest numbers for the harshest prose;
Let us, with generous scorn, the taste deride,
And sing our rivals with a rival's pride.
Ye gentle poets, who so oft complain
That foul neglect is all your labours gain;
That pity only checks your growing spite
To erring man, and prompts you still to write,
That your choice works on humble stalls are laid
Or vainly grace the windows of the trade;
Be ye my friends, if friendship e'er can warm
Those rival bosoms whom the Muses charm:
Think of the common cause wherein we go,
Like gallant Greeks against the Trojan foe;
Nor let one peevish chief his leader blame,
Till, crown'd with conquest, we regain our fame;
And let us join our forces to subdue,
This hold assuming but successful crew.
I sing of NEWS, and all those vapid sheets
The rattling hawker vends through gaping streets,
Whate'er their name, whate'er the time they fly
Damp from the press, to charm the reader's eye;
For, soon as Morning dawns with roseate hue,
The HERALD of the Morn arises too;
POST after POST succeeds, and, all day long,
GAZETTES and LEDGERS swarm, a noisy throng.
When evening comes, she comes with all her train
Of LEDGERS, CHRONICLES, and POSTS again,
Like bats, appearing, when the sun goes down,
From holes obscure and corners of the town.
Of all these triflers, all like these, I write;
Oh! like my subject could my song delight,
The crowd of Lloyd's one poet's name should raise,
And all the Alley echo to his praise.
In shoals the hours their constant numbers bring,
Like insects waking to th' advancing spring;
Which take their rise from grubs obscene that lie
In shallow pools, or thence ascend the sky:
Such are these base ephemeras, so born
To die before the next revolving morn.
Yet thus they differ: insect-tribes are lost
In the first visit of a winter's frost;
While these remain, a base but constant breed,
Whose swarming sons their short-lived sires succeed,
No changing season makes their number less,
Nor Sunday shines a sabbath on the press!
Then lo! the sainted MONITOR is born,
Whose pious face some sacred texts adorn;

As artful sinners cloak the secret sin,
To veil with seeming grace the guile within;
So Moral Essays on his front appear,
But all his carnal business in the rear;
The fresh-coin'd lie, the secret whisper'd last,
And all the gleanings of the six days past.
With these retired, through half the Sabbath-day
The London lounger yawns his hours away:
Not so, my little flock! your preacher fly,
Nor waste the time no worldly wealth can buy;
But let the decent maid and sober clown
Pray for these idlers of the sinful town:
This day, at least, on nobler themes bestow,
Nor give to WOODFALL, or the world below.
But, Sunday past, what numbers flourish then,
What wondrous labours of the press and pen!
Diurnal most, some thrice each week affords,
Some only once,—O avarice of words!
When thousand starving minds such manna seek
To drop the precious food but once a week.
Endless it were to sing the powers of all,
Their names, their numbers; how they rise and fall:
Like baneful herbs the gazer's eye they seize,
Rush to the head, and poison where they please:
Like idle flies, a busy, buzzing train,
They drop their maggots in the trifler's brain:
That genial soil receives the fruitful store,
And there they grow, and breed a thousand more.
Now be their arts display'd, how first they choose
A cause and party, as the bard his muse:
Inspired by these, with clamorous zeal they cry,
And through the town their dreams and omens fly.
So the Sibylline leaves were blown about:
Disjointed scraps of fate involved in doubt;
So idle dreams, the journals of the night,
Are right and wrong by turns, and mingle wrong with right:-
Some champions for the rights that prop the crown,
Some sturdy patriots, sworn to pull them down;
Some neutral powers, with secret forces fraught,
Wishing for war, but willing to be bought:
While some to every side and party go,
Shift every friend, and join with every foe;
Like sturdy rogues in privateers, they strike
This side and that, the foes of both alike;
A traitor-crew, who thrive in troubled times,
Fear'd for their force, and courted for their crimes.
Chief to the prosperous side the numbers sail,
Fickle and false, they veer with every gale;

As birds that migrate from a freez'ng shore,
In search of warmer climes come skimming o'er
Some bold adventurers first prepare to try
The doubtful sunshine of the distant sky;
But soon the growing Summer's certain sun
Wins more and more, till all at last are won:
So, on the early prospect of disgrace,
Fly in vast troops this apprehensive race;
Instinctive tribes! their failing food they dread.
And buy, with timely change, their future bread.
Such are our guides: how many a peaceful head,
Born to be still, have they to wrangling led!
How many an honest zealot stol'n from trade
And factious tools of pious pastors made!
With clews like these they thread the maze of state
These oracles explore, to learn our fate;
Pleased with the guides who can so well deceive,
Who cannot lie so fast as they believe.
Oft lend I, loth, to some sage friend an ear,
(For we who will not speak are doom'd to hear);
While he, bewilder'd, tells his anxious thought,
Infectious fear from tainted scribblers caught,
Or idiot hope; for each his mind assails,
As LLOYD'S court-light or STOCKDALE'S gloom prevails
Yet stand I patient while but one declaims,
Or gives dull comments on the speech he maims:
But oh! ye Muses, keep your votary's feet
From tavern-haunts where politicians meet;
Where rector, doctor, and attorney pause,
First on each parish, then each public cause:
Indited roads, and rates that still increase;
The murmuring poor, who will not fast in peace;
Election zeal and friendship, since declined;
A tax commuted, or a tithe in kind;
The Dutch and Germans kindling into strife;
Dull port and poachers vile! the serious ills of life.
Here comes the neighbouring Justice, pleased to guide
His little club, and in the chair preside,
In private business his commands prevail,
On public themes his reasoning turns the scale;
Assenting silence soothes his happy ear,
And, in or out, his party triumphs here.
Nor there th' infectious rage for party stops,
But flits along from palaces to shops;
Our weekly journals o'er the land abound,
And spread their plague and influenzas round;
The village, too, the peaceful, pleasant plain,
Breeds the Whig farmer and the Tory swain;

Brooks' and St. Alban's boasts not, but instead,
Stares the Red Ram, and swings the Rodney's Head:—
Hither, with all a patriot's care, comes he
Who owns the little hut that makes him free;
Whose yearly forty shillings buy the smile
Of mightier men, and never waste the while;
Who feels his freehold's worth, and looks elate,
A little prop and pillar of the state.
Here he delights the weekly news to con,
And mingle comments as he blunders on;
To swallow all their varying authors teach,
To spell a title, and confound a speech:
Till with a muddled mind he quits the news,
And claims his nation's license to abuse:
Then joins the cry, "That all the courtly race
Are venial candidates for power and place;"
Yet feels some joy, amid the general vice,
That his own vote will bring its wonted price.
These are the ills the teeming Press supplies,
The pois'nous springs from learning's fountain rise:
Not there the wise alone their entrance find,
Imparting useful lights to mortals blind:
But, blind themselves, these erring guides hold out
Alluring lights to lead us far about:
Screen'd by such means, here Scandal whets her quill,
Here Slander shoots unseen, where'er she will;
Here Fraud and Falsehood labour to deceive,
And Folly aids them both, impatient to believe
Such, sons of Britain! are the guides ye trust:
So wise their counsel, their reports so just!
Yet, though we cannot call their morals pure,
Their judgment nice, or their decisions sure;
Merit they have to mightier works unknown,
A style, a manner, and a fate their own.
We, who for longer fame with labour strive,
Are pain'd to keep our sickly works alive;
Studious we toil, with patient care refine,
Nor let our love protect one languid line.
Severe ourselves, at last our works appear,
When, ah! we find our readers more severe;
For, after all our care and pains, how few
Acquire applause, or keep it if they do!—
Not so these sheets, ordain'd to happier fate,
Praised through their day, and but that day their date
Their careless authors only strive to join
As many words as make an even line;
As many lines as fill a row complete;
As many rows as furnish up a sheet:

From side to side, with ready types they run,
The measure's ended, and the work is done;
Oh, born with ease, how envied and how blest!
Your fate to-day and your to-morrow's rest.
To you all readers turn, and they can look
Pleased on a paper, who abhor a book,
Those who ne'er deign'd their Bible to peruse,
Would think it hard to be denied their News;
Sinners and saints, the wisest with the weak,
Here mingle tastes, and one amusement seek;
This, like the public inn, provides a treat,
Where each promiscuous guest sits down to eat,
And such this mental food, as we may call
Something to all men, and to some men all.

Next, in what rare production shall we trace
Such various subjects in so small a space?
As the first ship upon the waters bore
Incongruous kinds who never met before;
Or as some curious virtuoso joins,
In one small room, moths, minerals, and coins,
Birds, beasts, and fishes; nor refuses place
To serpents, toads, and all the reptile race;
So here, compress'd within a single sheet,
Great things and small, the mean and mighty meet
'Tis this which makes all Europe's business known
Yet here a private man may place his own;
And, where he reads of Lords and Commons, he
May tell their honours that he sells rappee.

Add next th' amusement which the motley page
Affords to either sex and every age:
Lo! where it comes before the cheerful fire,—
Damps from the press in smoky curls aspire
(As from the earth the sun exhales the dew),
Ere we can read the wonders that ensue:
Then eager every eye surveys the part,
That brings its favourite subject to the heart
Grave politicians look for facts alone,
And gravely add conjectures of their own:
The sprightly nymph, who never broke her rest,
For tottering crowns, or mighty lands oppress'd,
Finds broils and battles, but neglects them all
For songs and suits, a birth-day, or a ball:
The keen warm man o'erlooks each idle tale
For "Monies wanted," and "Estates on Sale;"
While some with equal minds to all attend,
Pleased with each part, and grieved to find an end.

So charm the News; but we, who far from town
Wait till the postman brings the packet down,

Once in the week, a vacant day behold,
And stay for tidings, till they're three days old:
That day arrives; no welcome post appears,
But the dull morn a sullen aspect wears:
We meet, but ah! without our wanted smile,
To talk of headaches, and complain of bile;
Sullen we ponder o'er a dull repast,
Nor feast the body while the mind must fast.
A master-passion is the love of news,
Not music so commands, nor so the Muse:
Give poets claret, they grow idle soon:
Feed the musician, and he's out of tune;
But the sick mind, of this disease posses'd,
Flies from all cure, and sickens when at rest.
Now sing, my Muse, what various parts compose
These rival sheets of politics and prose.
First, from each brother's hoard a part they draw
A mutual theft that never fear'd a law;
Whate'er they gain, to each man's portion fall,
And read it once, you read it through them all:
For this their runners ramble day and night,
To drag each lurking deep to open light;
For daily bread the dirty trade they ply,
Coin their fresh tales, and live upon the lie:
Like bees for honey, forth for news they spring,—
Industrious creatures! ever on the wing;
Home to their several cells they bear the store,
Cull'd of all kinds, then roam abroad for more.
No anxious virgin flies to "fair Tweed-side;"
No injured husband mourns his faithless bride:
No duel dooms the fiery youth to bleed;
But through the town transpires each ventrous deed.
Should some fair frail-one drive her prancing pair
Where rival peers contend to please the fair;
When, with new force, she aids her conquering eyes,
And beauty decks, with all that beauty buys;
Quickly we learn whose heart her influence feels
Whose acres melt before her glowing wheels.
To these a thousand idle themes succeed,
Deeds of all kinds, and comments to each deed.
Here stocks, the state-barometers, we view
That rise or fall, by causes known to few;
Promotion's ladder who goes up or down;
Who wed, or who seduced, amuse the town;
What new-born heir has made his father blest;
What heir exults, his father now at rest;
That ample list the Tyburn-herald gives,
And each known knave, who still for Tyburn lives.

So grows the work, and now the printer tries
His powers no more, but leans on his allies.
When lo! the advertising tribe succeed,
Pay to be read, yet find but few will read;
And chief th' illustrious race, whose drops and pills
Have patent powers to vanquish human ills:
These, with their cures, a constant aid remain,
To bless the pale composer's fertile brain;
Fertile it is, but still the noblest soil
Requires some pause, some intervals from toil;
And they at least a certain ease obtain
From Katterfelto's skill, and Graham's glowing strain.
I too must aid, and pay to see my name
Hung in these dirty avenues to fame;
Nor pay in vain, if aught the Muse has seen,
And sung, could make these avenues more clean:
Could stop one slander ere it found its way,
And gave to public scorn its helpless prey:
By the same aid, the Stage invites her friends,
And kindly tells the banquet she intends;
Thither from real life the many run,
With Siddons weep, or laugh with Abingdon;
Pleased in fictitious joy or grief, to see
The mimic passion with their own agree;
To steal a few enchanted hours away
From self, and drop the curtain on the day.
But who can steal from self that wretched wight
Whose darling work is tried, some fatal night?
Most wretched man! when, bane to every bliss,
He hears the serpent-critic's rising hiss:
Then groans succeed; nor traitors on the wheel
Can feel like him, or have such pangs to feel.
Nor end they here: next day he reads his fall
In every paper; critics are they all:
He sees his branded name, with wild affright,
And hears again the cat-calls of the night.
Such help the STAGE affords: a larger space
Is fill'd by PUFFS and all the puffing race.
Physic had once alone the lofty style,
The well-known boast, that ceased to raise a smile:
Now all the province of that tribe invade,
And we abound in quacks of every trade.
The simple barber, once an honest name,
Cervantes founded, Fielding raised his fame:
Barber no more—a gay perfumer comes,
On whose soft cheek his own cosmetic blooms:
Here he appears, each simple mind to move,
And advertises beauty, grace and love.

—"Come, faded belles, who would your youth renew,
And learn the wonders of Olympian dew;
Restore the roses that begin to faint,
Nor think celestial washes vulgar paint:
Your former features, airs, and arts assume,
Circassian virtues, with Circassian bloom.
Come, battered beaux, whose locks are turn'd to grey
And crop Discretion's lying badge away!
Read where they vend these smart engaging things,
These flaxen frontlets with elastic springs;
No female eye the fair deception sees,
Not Nature's self so natural as these."

Such are their arts, but not confined to them,
The Muse impartial must her sons condemn:
For they, degenerate! join the venal throng,
And puff a lazy Pegasus along:
More guilty these, by Nature less design'd
For little arts that suit the vulgar kind.
That barber's boys, who would to trade advance,
Wish us to call them, smart Friseurs from France;
That he who builds a chop-house, on his door
Paints "The true old original Blue Boar!"—

These are the arts by which a thousand live,
Where Truth may smile, and Justice may forgive—
But when, amidst this rabble rout, we find
A puffing poet to his honour blind:
Who slily drops quotations all about
Packet or Post, and points their merit out;
Who advertises what reviewers say,
With sham editions every second day;
Who dares not trust his praises out of sight,
But hurries into fame with all his might;
Although the verse some transient praise obtains,
Contempt is all the anxious poet gains.

Now Puffs exhausted, Advertisements past,
Their Correspondents stand exposed at last;
These are a numerous tribe, to fame unknown,
Who for the public good forego their own;
Who volunteers in paper-war engage,
With double portion of their party's rage:
Such are the Bruti, Decii, who appear
Wooing the printer for admission here;
Whose generous souls can condescend to pray
For leave to throw their precious time away.
Oh! cruel WOODFALL! when a patriot draws
His gray-goose quill in his dear country's cause
To vex and maul a ministerial race
Can thy stern soul refuse the champion place?

Alas! thou know'st not with what anxious heart
He longs his best-loved labours to impart;
How he has sent them to thy brethren round,
And still the same unkind reception found:
At length indignant will he damn the state,
Turn to his trade, and leave us to our fate.
These Roman souls, like Rome's great sons, are known
To live in cells on labours of their own.
Thus Milo, could we see the noble chief,
Feeds, for his country's good, on legs of beef:
Camillus copies deeds for sordid pay,
Yet fights the public battles twice a day:
E'en now the godlike Brutus views his score
Scroll'd on the bar-board, swinging with the door;
Where, tippling punch, grave Cato's self you'll see,
And *Amor Patriæ* vending smuggled tea.
Last in these ranks, and least, their art's disgrace,
Neglected stand the Muses' meanest race;
Scribblers who court contempt, whose verse the eye
Disdainful views, and glances swiftly by:
This Poet's Corner is the place they choose,
A fatal nursery for an infant Muse;
Unlike that Corner where true Poets lie,
These cannot live, and they shall never die;
Hapless the lad whose mind such dreams invade,
And win to verse the talents due to trade.
Curb then, O youth! these raptures as they rise,
Keep down the evil spirit and be wise;
Follow your calling, think the Muses foes,
Nor lean upon the pestle and compose.
I know your day-dreams, and I know the snare
Hid in your flow'ry path, and cry "Beware!"
Thoughtless of ill, and to the future blind,
A sudden couplet rushes on your mind;
Here you may nameless print your idle rhymes,
And read your first-born work a thousand times;
Th' infection spreads, your couplet grows apace,
Stanzas to Delia's dog or Celia's face:
You take a name; Philander's odes are seen,
Printed, and praised, in every magazine:
Diarian sages greet their brother sage,
And your dark pages please th' enlighten'd age.—
Alas! what years you thus consume in vain,
Ruled by this wretched bias of the brain!
Go! to your desks and counters all return;
Your sonnets scatter, your acrostics burn;
Trade, and be rich; or, should your careful sires
Bequeath you wealth, indulge the nobler fires:

Should love of fame your youthful heart betray
Pursue fair fame, but in a glorious way,
Nor in the idle scenes of Fancy's painting stray.
  Of all the good that mortal men pursue,
The Muse has least to give, and gives to few;
Like some coquettish fair, she leads us on,
With smiles and hopes, till youth and peace are gone;
Then, wed for life, the wrestless wrangling pair
Forget how constant one, and one how fair:
Meanwhile, Ambition, like a blooming bride,
Brings power and wealth to grace her lover's side;
And though she smiles not with such flattering charms
The brave will sooner win her to their arms.
  Then wed to her, if Virtue tie the bands,
Go spread your country's fame in hostile lands;
Her court, her senate, or her arms adorn,
And let her foes lament that you were born:
Or weigh her laws, their ancient rights defend.
Though hosts oppose, be theirs and Reason's friend;
Arm'd with strong powers, in their defence engage,
And rise the THURLOW of the future age.

THE PARISH REGISTER.

IN THREE PARTS

The Village Register considered, as containing principally the Annals of the Poor—State of the Peasantry as meliorated by Frugality and Industry—The Cottage of an Industrious Peasant; its Ornaments—Prints and Books—The Garden; its Satisfactions—The State of the Poor, when improvident and vicious—The Row or Street, and its inhabitants—The Dwellings of one of these—A Public House—Garden and its Appendages—Gamesters; Rustic Sharpers, &c.—Conclusion of the Introductory Part.

The Child of the Miller's Daughter, and Relation of her Misfortune—A frugal Couple: their Kind of Frugality—Plea of the Mother of a Natural Child: her Churching—Large Family of Gerard Ablett: his Apprehensions: Comparison between his State and that of the wealthy Farmer his master: his Consolation—An old Man's Anxiety for an Heir: the Jealousy of another on having many—Characters of the Grocer Dawkins and his Friend; their different Kinds of Disappointment—Three Infants named—An Orphan Girl and Village School-mistress—Gardener's Child: Pedantry and Conceit of the Father: his Botanical Discourse: Method of fixing the Embryo-fruit of Cucumbers—Absurd effects of Rustic Vanity: observed in the Names of their Children—Relation of the Vestry Debate on a Foundling: Sir Richard Monday—Children of various Inhabitants—The Poor Farmer—Children of a Profligate: his Character and Fate—Conclusion.

PART I.

BAPTISMS.

THE year revolves, and I again explore
The simple Annals of my Parish poor;
What infant-members in my flock appear,
What Pairs I bless'd in the departed year;
And who, of Old or Young, or Nymphs or Swains,
Are lost to Life, its pleasures and its pains.
No Muse I ask, before my view to bring
The humble actions of the swains I sing,—
How pass'd the youthful, how the old their days;
Who sank in sloth, and who aspired to praise;
Their tempers, manners, morals, customs, arts,
What parts they had, and how they employed their parts

By what elated, soothed, seduced, depress'd,
Full well I know these Records give the rest.
Is there a place, save one the poet sees,
A land of love, of liberty and ease;
Where labour wearies not, nor cares suppress
Th' eternal flow of rustic happiness;
Where no proud mansion frowns in awful state,
Or keeps the sunshine from the cottage-gate;
Where young, and old, intent on pleasure, throng,
And half man's life is holiday and song?
Vain search for scenes like these! no view appears,
By sighs unruffled or sustain'd by tears;
Since vice the world subdued and waters drown'd,
Auburn and Eden can no more be found
Hence good and evil mix'd, but man has skill
And power to part them when he feels the will:
Toil, care, and patience bless th' abstemious few.
Fear, shame, and want the thoughtless herd pursue.
Behold the Cot! where thrives th' industrious swain
Source of his pride, his pleasure, and his gain;
Screen'd from the winter's wind, the sun's last ray
Smiles on the window and prolongs the day;
Projecting thatch the woodbine's branches stop,
And turn their blossoms to the casement's top:
All need requires is in that cot contain'd,
And much that taste untaught and unrestrain'd
Surveys delighted; there she loves to trace,
In one gay picture, all the royal race:
Around the walls are heroes, lovers, kings:
The print that shows them and the verse that sings.
Here the last Lewis on his throne is seen,
And there he stands imprison'd and his Queen;
To these the mother takes her child, and shows
What grateful duty to his God he owes;
Who gives to him a happy home, where he
Lives and enjoys his freedom with the free;
When kings and queens, dethroned, insulted, tried,
Are all these blessings of the poor denied,
There is King Charles, and all his Golden Rules,
Who proved Misfortune's was the best of schools:
And there his Son, who, tried by years of pain,
Proved that misfortunes may be sent in vain.
The Magic-mill that grinds the grandams young
[illegible] at the side of kind Godiva hung:
She, of her favourite place the pride and joy,
Of charms at once most lavish and most coy
By wanton act the purest fame could raise,
And gave the boldest deed the chastest praise.

There stands the stoutest Ox in England fed;
There fights the boldest Jew, Whitechapel bred;
And here Saint Monday's worthy votaries live,
In all the joys that ale and skittles give.
Now lo! on Egypt's coast that hostile fleet,
By nations dreaded and by NELSON beat:
And here shall soon another triumph come,
A deed of glory in a day of gloom:
Distressing glory! grievous boon of fate!
The proudest conquest, at the dearest rate.
On shelf of deal beside the cuckoo-clock,
Of cottage-reading rests the chosen stock:
Learning we lack, not books, but have a kind
For all our wants, a meat for every mind:
The tale for wonder and the joke for whim,
The half-sung sermon and the half-groan'd hymn
No need of classing: each within its place,
The feeling finger in the dark can trace:
"First from the corner, farthest from the wall,"
Such all the rules, and they suffice for all.
There pious works for Sunday's use are found:
Companions for that Bible newly bound;
That Bible, bought by sixpence weekly saved,
Has choicest prints by famous hands engraved;
Has choicest notes by many a famous head,
Such as to doubt, have rustic leaders led:
Have made them stop to reason *why!* and *how!*
And, where they once agreed, to cavil now.
Oh! rather give me commentators plain,
Who with no deep researches vex the brain;
Who from the dark and doubtful love to run,
And hold their glimmering tapers to the sun;
Who simple truth with nine-fold reasons back,
And guard the point no enemies attack
Bunyan's famed Pilgrim rests that shelf upon,
A genius rare but rude was honest John;
Not one who, early by the Muse beguiled,
Drank from her well the waters undefiled;
Not one who slowly gain'd the hill sublime,
Then often sipp'd and little at a time;
But one who dabbled in the sacred springs,
And drank them muddy, mix'd with baser things.
Here to interpret dreams we read the rules,
Science our own! and never taught in schools;
In moles and specks we Fortune's gifts discern,
And Fate's fix'd will from Nature's wanderings learn.
Of Hermit Quarll we read, in island rare,
Far from mankind and seeming far from care,

Safe from all want, and sound in every limb:
Yes! there was he, and there was care with him.
Unbound and heap'd, these valued tomes beside,
Lay humbler works, the pedlar's pack supplied;
Yet these, long since, have all acquired a name;
The Wandering Jew has found his way to fame;
And farce, denied to many a labour'd song,
Crowns Thumb the Great, and Hickathrift the strong.
There too is he, by wizard-power upheld,
Jack, by whose arm the giant-brood were quell'd:
His shoes of swiftness on his feet he placed;
His coat of darkness on his loins he braced.
His sword of sharpness in his hand he took,
And off the heads of doughty giants stroke:
Their glaring eyes beheld no mortal near;
No sound of feet alarm'd the drowsy ear:
No English blood their pagan sense could smell,
But heads dropt headlong, wondering why they fell.
These are the Peasant's joy, when placed at ease
Half his delighted offspring mount his knees.
To every cot the lord's indulgent mind
Has a small space for garden-ground assign'd;
Here—till return of morn dismiss'd the farm—
The careful peasant plies the sinewy arm,
Warm'd as he works, and casts his look around
On every foot of that improving ground:
It is his own he sees; his master's eye
Peers not about, some secret fault to spy:
Nor voice severe is there, nor censure known;—
Hope, profit, pleasure,—they are all his own.
Here grow the humble cives, and, hard by them,
The leek with crown globose and reedy stem;
High climb his pulse in many an even row,
Deep strike the ponderous roots in soil below;
And herbs of potent smell and pungent taste,
Give a warm relish to the night's repast.
Apples and cherries grafted by his hand,
And cluster'd nuts for neighbouring market stand.
Nor thus concludes his labour; near the cot,
The reed-fence rises round some fav'rite spot;
Where rich carnations, pinks with purple eyes,
Proud hyacinths, the least some florist's prize,
Tulips tall-stemm'd and pounced auriculas rise.
Here on a Sunday-eve, when service ends,
Meet and rejoice a family of friends;
All speak aloud, are happy and are free,
And glad they seem, and gaily they agree.
What, though fastidious ears may shun the scene
Where all are talkers, and where none can teach;

Where still the welcome and the words are old,
And the same stories are for ever told;
Yet theirs is joy that, bursting from the heart,
Prompts the glad tongue these nothings to impart
That forms these tones of gladness we despise,
That lifts their steps, that sparkles in their eyes;
That talks or laughs or runs or shouts or plays,
And speaks in all their looks and all their ways.
Fair scenes of peace! ye might detain us long,
But vice and misery now demand the song:
And turn our view from dwellings simply neat,
To this infected Row, we term our Street.
Here, in cabal, a disputatious crew
Each evening meet: the sot, the cheat, the shrew:
Riots are nightly heard:—the curse, the cries
Of beaten wife, perverse in her replies;
While shrieking children hold each threat'ning hand
And sometimes life, and sometimes food demand·
Boys, in their first stol'n rags, to swear begin,
And girls, who heed not dress, are skill'd in gin·
Snarers and smugglers here their gains divide;
Ensnaring females here their victims hide;
And here is one, the Sibyl of the Row,
Who knows all secrets or affects to know.
Seeking their fate, to her the simple run,
To her the guilty, theirs awhile to shun;
Mistress of worthless arts, depraved in will,
Her care unblest and unrepaid her skill.
Slave to the tribe, to whose commands she stoops,
And poorer than the poorest maid she dupes.
Between the road-way and the walls, offence
Invades all eyes and strikes on every sense:
There lie, obscene, at every open door,
Heaps from the hearth and sweepings from the floor
And day by day the mingled masses grow,
As sinks are disembogued and kennels flow.
There hungry dogs from hungry children steal;
There pigs and chickens quarrel for a meal.
There dropsied infants wail without redress,
And all is want and woe and wretchedness:
Yet should these boys, with bodies bronzed and bare
High-swoln and hard, outlive that lack of care—
Forced on some farm, the unexerted strength,
Though loth to action, is compell'd at length,
When warm'd by health, as serpents in the spring.
Aside their slough of indolence they fling.
Yet, ere they go, a greater evil comes—
See crowded beds in those contiguous rooms;

Beds but ill parted, by a paltry screen
Of paper'd lath or curtain dropt between;
Daughters and sons to yon compartments creep,
And parents here beside their children sleep:
Ye who have power, these thoughtless people part,
Nor let the ear be first to taint the heart.
Come! search within, nor sight nor smell regard;
The true physician walks the foulest ward.
See! on the floor, what frousy patches rest!
What nauseous fragments on yon fractured chest!
What downy dust beneath yon window-seat!
And round these posts that serve this bed for feet:
This bed where all those tatter'd garments lie,
Worn by each sex, and now perforce thrown by!
See! as we gaze, an infant lifts its head,
Left by neglect and burrow'd in that bed;
The Mother-gossip has the love suppress'd
An infant's cry once waken'd in her breast;
And daily prattles, as her round she takes,
(With strong resentment) of the want she makes.
Whence all these woes?—From want of virtuous will
Of honest shame, of time improving skill;
From want of care t' employ the vacant hour,
And want of ev'ry kind but want of power.
Here are no wheels for either wool or flax,
But packs of cards—made up of sundry packs;
Here is no clock, nor will they turn the glass,
And see how swift th' important moments pass;
Here are no books, but ballads on the wall,
Are some abusive, and indecent all;
Pistols are here, unpair'd; with nets and hooks,
Of every kind, for rivers, ponds, and brooks;
An ample flask, that nightly rovers fill
With recent poison from the Dutchman's still;
A box of tools, with wires of various size,
Frocks, wigs, and hats, for night or day disguise
And bludgeons stout to gain or guard a prize.
To every house belongs a space of ground,
Of equal size, once fenced with paling round;
That paling now by slothful waste destroy'd,
Dead gorse and stumps of elder fill the void;
Save in the centre-spot, whose walls of clay
Hide sots and striplings at their drink or play;
Within, a board, beneath a tiled retreat,
Allures the bubble and maintains the cheat;
Where heavy ale in spots like varnish shows,
Where chalky tallies yet remain in rows;

Black pipes and broken jugs the seats defile,
The walls and windows, rhymes and reck'nings vile;
Prints of the meanest kind disgrace the door,
And cards, in curses torn, lie fragments on the floor
Here his poor bird th' inhuman Cocker brings,
Arms his hard heel and clips his golden wings;
With spicy food th' impatient spirit feeds,
And shouts and curses as the battle bleeds.
Struck through the brain, deprived of both his eyes
The vanquish'd bird must combat till he dies:
Must faintly peck at his victorious foe,
And reel and stagger at each feeble blow:
When fallen, the savage grasps his dabbled plumes,
His blood-stain'd arms, for other deaths assumes:
And damns the craven-fowl, that lost his stake,
And only bled and perish'd for his sake.
Such are our Peasants, those to whom we yield
Praise with relief, the fathers of the field:
And these who take from our reluctant hands,
What Burn advises or the Bench commands.
Our Farmers round, well pleased with constant gain,
Like other farmers, flourish and complain.—
These are our groups; our Portraits next appear,
And close our Exhibition for the year.

With evil omen we that year begin:
A Child of Shame,—stern Justice adds, of Sin,
Is first recorded:—I would hide the deed,
But vain the wish: I sigh and I proceed:
And could I well th' instructive truth convey,
'Twould warn the giddy and awake the gay.
Of all the nymphs who gave our village grace,
The Miller's daughter had the fairest face:
Proud was the Miller; money was his pride;
He rode to market, as our farmers ride,
And 'twas his boast, inspired by spirits, there,
His favourite Lucy should be rich as fair;
But she must meek and still obedient prove,
And not presume, without his leave, to love.
A youthful Sailor heard him;—"Ha!" quoth he,
"This Miller's maiden is a prize for me;
Her charms I love, his riches I desire,
And all his threats but fan the kindling fire;
My ebbing purse no more the foe shall fill,
But Love's kind act and Lucy at the mill."
Thus thought the youth, and soon the chase began,
Stretch'd all his sail, nor thought of pause or plan:

His trusty staff in his bold hand he took,
Like him and like his frigate, heart of oak;
Fresh were his features, his attire was new;
Clean was his linen, and his jacket blue:
Of finest jean, his trowsers, tight and trim,
Brush'd the large buckle at the silver rim.
He soon arrived, he traced the village-green,
There saw the maid, and was with pleasure seen;
Then talk'd of love, till Lucy's yielding heart
Confess'd 'twas painful, though 'twas right to part.
"For ah! my father has a haughty soul;
Whom best he loves, he loves but to control;
Me to some churl in bargain he'll consign,
And make some tyrant of the parish mine:
Cold is his heart, and he with looks severe
Has often forced but never shed the tear;
Save, when my mother died, some drops express'd
A kind of sorrow for a wife at rest:—
To me a master's stern regard is shown,
I'm like his steed, prized highly as his own;
Stroked but corrected, threaten'd when supplied,
His slave and beast, his victim and his pride."
"Cheer up, my lass! I'll to thy father go,
The Miller cannot be the Sailor's foe:
Both live by Heaven's free gale, that plays aloud
In the stretch'd canvass and the piping shroud;
The rush of winds, the flapping sails above,
And rattling planks within, are sounds we love;
Calms are our dread: when tempests plough the deep
We take a reef, and to the rocking sleep."
"Ha!" quoth the Miller, moved at speech so rash,
"Art thou like me? then where thy notes and cash?
Away to Wapping, and a wife command,
With all thy wealth a guinea, in thine hand;
There with thy messmates quaff the muddy cheer,
And leave my Lucy for thy betters here."
"Revenge! revenge!" the angry lover cried,
Then sought the nymph, and "Be thou now my bride.
Bride had she been, but they no priest could move
To bind in law, the couple bound by love.
What sought these lovers then by day, by night?
But stolen moments of disturb'd delight;
Soft trembling tumults, terrors dearly prized,
Transports that pain'd, and joys that agonised,
Till the fond damsel, pleased with lad so trim,
Awed by her parent, and enticed by him,
Her lovely form from savage power to save,
Gave—not her hand—but ALL she could she gave.

Then came the day of shame, the grievous night,
The varying look, the wandering appetite;
The joy assumed, while sorrow dimm'd the eyes,
The forced sad smiles that follow'd sudden sighs;
And every art, long used, but used in vain,
To hide thy progress, Nature, and thy pain.
Too eager caution shows some danger's near,
The bully's bluster proves the coward's fear;
His sober step the drunkard vainly tries,
And nymphs expose the failings they disguise.
First, whispering gossips were in parties seen,
Then louder Scandal walk'd the village-green;
Next babbling Folly told the growing ill,
And busy Malice dropp'd it at the mill.
"Go! to thy curse and mine," the Father said,
"Strife and confusion stalk around thy bed;
Want and a wailing brat thy portion be,
Plague to thy fondness, as thy fault to me;—
Where skulks the villain?"——
—"On the ocean wide
My William seeks a portion for his bride.—"
"Vain be his search! but, till the traitor come,
The higgler's cottage be thy future home;
There with his ancient shrew and care abide,
And hide thy head,—thy shame thou canst not hide."
Day after day was pass'd in pains and grief;
Week follow'd week,—and still was no relief:
Her boy was born—no lads nor lasses came
To grace the rite or give the child a name;
Nor grave conceited nurse, of office proud,
Bore the young Christian roaring through the crowd:
In a small chamber was my office done,
Where blinks through paper'd panes the setting sun;
Where noisy sparrows, perch'd on penthouse near,
Chirp tuneless joy, and mock the frequent tear;
Bats on their webby wings in darkness move,
And feebly shriek their melancholy love.
No Sailor came: the months in terror fled!
Then news arrived—he fought, and he was DEAD!
At the lone cottage Lucy lives, and still
Walks for her weekly pittance to the mill;
A mean seraglio there her father keeps,
Whose mirth insults her, as she stands and weeps;
And sees the plenty, while compell'd to stay,
Her father's pride, become his harlot's prey.
Throughout the lanes she glides, at evening's close
And softly lulls her infant to repose;

Then sits and gazes, but with viewless look,
As gilds the moon the rippling of the brook;
And sings her vespers, but in voice so low,
She hears their murmurs as the waters flow:
And she too murmurs, and begins to find
The solemn wanderings of a wounded mind:
Visions of terror, views of woe succeed,
The mind's impatience, to the body's need;
By turns to that, by turns to this a prey. [may.
She knows what reason yields, and dreads what madness

Next, with their boy, a decent couple came,
And call'd him Robert, 'twas his father's name;
Three girls preceded, all by time endear'd,
And future births were neither hoped nor fear'd:
Blest in each other, but to no excess,
Health, quiet, comfort, form'd their happiness;
Love all made up of torture and delight,
Was but mere madness in this couple's sight:
Susan could think, though not without a sigh,
If she were gone, who should her place supply:
And Robert, half in earnest, half in jest,
Talk of her spouse when he should be at rest:
Yet strange would either think it to be told,
Their love was cooling or their hearts were cold.
Few were their acres,—but, with these content,
They were, each pay-day, ready with their rent:
And few their wishes—what their farm denied,
The neighbouring town, at trifling cost, supplied.
If at the draper's window Susan cast
A longing look, as with her goods she past,
And, with the produce of the wheel and churn,
Bought her a Sunday-robe on her return;
True to her maxim, she would take no rest,
Till care repaid that portion to the chest:
Or if, when loitering at the Whitsun-fair,
Her Robert spent some idle shillings there;
Up at the barn, before the break of day,
He made his labour for th' indulgence pay:
Thus both—that waste itself might work in vain—
Wrought double tides, and all was well again.

Yet, though so prudent, there were times of joy
(The day they wed, the christening of the boy,)
When to the wealthier farmers there was shown
Welcome unfeign'd, and plenty like their own:
For Susan served the great, and had some pride
Among our topmost people to preside:
Yet in that plenty, in that welcome free,
There was the guiding nice frugality,

That, in the festal as the frugal day,
Has, in a different mode, a sovereign sway;
As tides the same attractive influence know,
In the least ebb and in their proudest flow;
The wise frugality, that does not give
A life to saving, but that saves to live;
Sparing, not pinching, mindful though not mean,
O'er all presiding, yet in nothing seen.

Recorded next a babe of love I trace!
Of many loves, the mother's fresh disgrace.—
"Again, thou harlot! could not all thy pain,
All my reproof thy wanton thoughts restrain?"
"Alas! your reverence, wanton thoughts I grant,
Were once my motive, now the thoughts of want;
Women, like me, as ducks in a decoy,
Swim down a stream, and seem to swim in joy:
Your sex pursue us, and our own disdain;
Return is dreadful, and escape is vain.
Would men forsake us, and would women strive
To help the fall'n, their virtue might revive."

For right of churching soon she made her way,
In dread of scandal, should she miss the day:—
Two matrons came! with them she humbly knelt,
Their action copied and their comforts felt,
From that great pain and peril to be free,
Though still in peril of that pain to be;
Alas! what numbers, like this amorous dame,
Are quick to censure, but are dead to shame!

Twin-infants then appear; a girl, a boy,
Th' o'erflowing cup of Gerard Ablett's joy:
One had I named in every year that pass'd
Since Gerard wed! and twins behold at last!
Well pleased, the bridegroom smiled to hear—"A vine
Fruitful and spreading round the walls be thine,
And branch-like be thine offspring!"—Gerard then
Look'd joyful love, and softly said, "Amen."
Now of that vine he'd have no more increase,
Those playful branches now disturb his peace.
Them he beholds around his tables spread,
But finds the more the branch, the less the bread;
And while they run his humble walls about,
They keep the sunshine of good humour out.

Cease, man, to grieve! thy master's lot survey
Whom wife and children, thou and thine obey;
A farmer proud, beyond a farmer's pride,
Of all around the envy or the guide:
Who trots to market on a steed so fine,
That when I meet him, I'm ashamed of mine;

Whose board is high up-heap'd with generous fare,
Which five stout sons and three tall daughters share.
Cease, man, to grieve, and listen to his care.
A few years fled, and all thy boys shall be
Lords of a cot, and labourers like thee:
Thy girls unportion'd neighb'ring youths shall lead
Brides from my church, and thenceforth thou art freed:
But then thy master shall of cares complain,
Care after care, a long connected train;
His sons for farms shall ask a large supply,
For farmers' sons each gentle miss shall sigh;
Thy mistress, reasoning well of life's decay,
Shall ask a chaise, and hardly brook delay;
The smart young cornet who, with so much grace,
Rode in the ranks and betted at the race,
While the vex'd parent rails at deed so rash,
Shall d—n his luck, and stretch his hand for cash.
Sad troubles, Gerard! now pertain to thee,
When thy rich master seems from trouble free;
But 'tis one fate at different times assign'd,
And thou shalt lose the cares that he must find.
"Ah!" quoth our village Grocer, rich and old,
"Would I might one such cause for care behold!"
To whom his Friend, "Mine greater bliss would be,
Would Heav'n take those my spouse assigns to me."
Aged were both, that Dawkins, Ditchem this,
Who much of marriage thought, and much amiss;
Both would delay, the one, till—riches gain'd,
The son he wish'd might be to honour train'd:
His friend—lest fierce intruding heirs should come,
To waste his hoard and vex his quiet home.
Dawkins, a dealer once, on burthen'd back
Bore his whole substance in a pedlar's pack;
To dames discreet, the duties yet unpaid,
His stores of lace and hyson he convey'd:
When thus enrich'd, he chose at home to stop
And fleece his neighbours in a new-built shop;
Then woo'd a spinster blithe, and hoped, when wed,
For love's fair favours and a fruitful bed.
Not so his Friend;—on widow fair and staid
He fix'd his eye, but he was much afraid;
Yet woo'd; while she his hair of silver hue
Demurely noticed, and her eye withdrew:
Doubtful he paused—"Ah! were I sure," he cried,
"No craving children would my gains divide;
Fair as she is, I would my widow take,
And live more largely for my partner's sake."

With such their views some thoughtful years they pass'd,
And hoping, dreading, they were bound at last.
And what their fate? Observe them as they go,
Comparing fear with fear and woe with woe.
"Humphrey!" said Dawkins, "envy in my breast
Sickens to see thee in thy children blest;
They are thy joys, while I go grieving home
To a sad spouse, and our eternal gloom:
We look despondency; no infant near,
To bless the eye or win the parent's ear;
Our sudden heats and quarrels to allay,
And soothe the petty sufferings of the day.
Alike our want, yet both the want reprove,
Where are, I cry, these pledges of our love?
When she, like Jacob's wife, makes fierce reply,
Yet fond—Oh! give me children, or I die:
And I return—still childless doom'd to live,
Like the vex'd patriarch—Are they mine to give?
Ah! much I envy thee thy boys, who ride
On poplar branch, and canter at thy side;
And girls, whose cheeks thy chin's fierce fondness know
And with fresh beauty at the contact glow." [gain.
"Oh! simple friend," said Ditchem, "would'st thou
A father's pleasure by a husband's pain?
Alas! what pleasure—when some vig'rous boy
Should swell thy pride, some rosy girl thy joy:
Is it to doubt who grafted this sweet flower,
Or whence arose that spirit and that power?
"Four years I've wed; not one has pass'd in vain
Behold the fifth! behold a babe again!
My wife's gay friends th' unwelcome imp admire,
And fill the room with gratulation dire:
While I in silence sate, revolving all
That influence ancient men, or that befall;
A gay pert guest—Heav'n knows his business—came;
"A glorious boy," he cried, "and what the name?"
Angry I growl'd,—My spirit cease to tease,
Name it yourselves,—Cain, Judas, if you please;
His father's give him,—should you that explore,
The devil's or yours:—I said, and sought the door
My tender partner not a word or sigh
Gives to my wrath, nor to my speech reply;
But takes her comforts, triumphs in my pain,
And looks undaunted for a birth again."
Heirs thus denied afflict the pining heart,
And thus afforded, jealous pangs impart;
Let, therefore, none avoid, and none demand
These arrows number'd for the giant's hand.

Then with their infants three, the parents came,
And each assign'd—'twas all they had—a name;
Names of no mark or price; of them not one
Shall court our view on the sepulchral stone.
Or stop the clerk, th' engraven scrolls to spell,
Or keep the sexton from the sermon bell.

An orphan-girl succeeds: ere she was born
Her father died, her mother on that morn:
The pious mistress of the school sustains
Her parents' part, nor their affection feigns,
But pitying feels, with due respect and joy,
I trace the matron at her loved employ;
What time the stripplings, wearied e'en with play,
Part at the closing of the summer's day,
And each by different path returns the well-known way—
Then I beheld her at her cottage-door,
Frugal of light,—her Bible laid before,
When on her double duty she proceeds,
Of time as frugal—knitting as she reads:
Her idle neighbours, who approach to tell
Some trifling tale, her serious looks compel
To hear reluctant,—while the lads who pass
In pure respect, walk silent on the grass:
Then sinks to day, but not to rest she goes,
Till solemn prayers the daily duties close.

But I digress, and lo; an infant train
Appear, and call me to my task again
"Why Lonicera wilt thou name thy child?"
I asked the Gardener's wife, in accents mild:
"We have a right," replied the sturdy dame;—
And Lonicera was the infant's name.
If next a son shall yield our Gardener joy,
Then Hyacinthus shall be that fair boy;
And if a girl, they will at length agree,
That Belladonna that fair maid shall be.

High sounding words our worthy gardener gets,
And at his club to wondering swains repeats;
He then of Rhus and Rhododendron speaks,
And Allium calls his onions and his leeks;
Nor weeds are now, for whence arose the weed,
Scarce plants, fair herbs, and curious flowers proceed;
Where Cuckoo-pints and Dandelions sprung,
(Gross names had they our plainer sires among,)
There Arums, there Leontodons we view,
And Artemesia grows, where Wormwood grew.

But though no weed exists his garden round,
From Rumex strong our Gardener frees his ground,

Takes soft Senecio from the yielding land,
And grasps the arm'd Urtica in his hand.
Not Darwin's self had more delight to sing
Of floral courtship, in th' awaken d Spring,
Then Peter Pratt, who simpering loves to tell
How rise the Stamens, as the Pistils swell;
How bend and curl the moist-top to the spouse,
And give and take the vegetable vows;
How those esteem'd of old but tips and chives,
Are tender husbands and obedient wives,
Who live and love within the sacred bower,—
That bridal bed, the vulgar term a flower.
Here Peter proudly, to some humble friend,
A wondrous secret, in his science, lend:—
"Would you advance the nuptial hour, and bring
The fruit of Autumn with the flowers of Spring;
View that light frame where Cucumis lies spread,
And trace the husbands in their golden bed,
Three powder'd Anthers;—then no more delay
But to the Stigma's tip their dust convey;
Then by thyself, from prying glance secure,
Twirl the full tip and make your purpose sure;
A long-abiding race the deed shall pay,
Nor one unblest abortion pine away."
I admire their friend's discourse our swains agree,
And call it science and philosophy.
'T is good, 't is pleasant, through the advancing year
To see unnumber'd growing forms appear;
What leafy-life from Earth's broad bosom rise!
What insect-myriads seek the summer skies!
What scaly tribes in every streamlet move;
What plumy people sing in every grove!
All with the year awaked to life, delight and love.
Then names are good; for how, without their aid,
Is knowledge, gain'd by man, to man convey'd?
But from that source shall all our pleasures flow?
Shall all our knowledge be those names to know?
Then he, with memory blest, shall bear away
The pair from Grew, and Middleton, and Ray:
No! let us rather seek, in grove and field,
What food for wonder, what for use they yield;
Some just remark from Nature's people bring,
And some new source of homage for her King.
Pride lives with all: strange names our rustics give
To helpless infants, that their own may live;
Pleased to be known, they'll some attention claim,
And find some by-way to the house of fame.

The straightest furrow lifts the ploughman's art,
The hat he gain'd has warmth for head and heart;
The bowl that beats the greater number down
Of tottering nine-pins, gives to fame the clown;
Or, foil'd in these, he opes his ample jaws,
And let a frog leap down, to gain applause;
Or grins for hours, or tipples for a week,
Or challenges a well-pinch'd pig to squeak:
Some idle deed, some child's preposterous name,
Shall make him known, and give his folly fame.
To name an infant meet our village sires,
Assembled all as such event requires;
Frequent and full, the rural sages sate,
And speakers many urged the long debate,—
Some hardened knaves, who roved the country round
Had left a babe within the parish-bound.—
First, of the fact they question'd—"Was it true?"
The child was brought—"What then remain'd to do?
"Was 't dead or living?" This was fairly proved,—
'Twas pinch'd, it roar'd, and every doubt removed,—
Then by what name th' unwelcome guest to call
Was long a question, and it posed them all;
For he who lent it to a babe unknown,
Censorious men might take it for his own:
They look'd about, they gravely spoke to all,
And not one *Richard* answer'd to the call.
Next they enquired the day, when, passing by,
Th' unlucky peasant heard the stranger's cry:
This known,—how food and raiment they might give,
Was next debated—for the rogue would live:
At last, with all their words and work content,
Back to their homes the prudent vestry went,
And *Richard Monday* to the workhouse sent.

There was he pinch'd and pitied, thump'd and fed,
And duly took his beatings and his bread;
Patient in all control, in all abuse,
He found contempt and kicking have their use:
Sad, silent, supple: bending to the blow,
A slave of slaves, the lowest of the low;
His pliant soul gave way to all things base,
He knew no shame, he dreaded no disgrace.
It seem'd, so well his passions he suppress'd,
No feeling stirr'd his ever-torpid breast;
Him might the meanest pauper bruise and cheat
He was a footstool for the beggar's feet;
His were the legs that ran at all commands;
They used on all occasions Richard's hands:

His very soul was not his own; he stole
As others order'd, and without a dole;
In all disputes, on either part he lied,
And freely pledged his oath on either side;
In all rebellions Richard join'd the rest,
In all detections Richard first confess'd:
Yet, though disgraced, he watched his time so well,
He rose in favour, when in fame he fell;
Base was his usage, vile his whole employ,
And all despised and fed the pliant boy.
At length, "'Tis time he should abroad be sent,"
Was whisper'd near him.—and abroad he went;
One morn they call'd him, Richard answer'd not;
They deem'd him hanging, and in time forgot,—
Yet miss'd him long, as each, throughout the clan,
Found he "had better spared a better man."

Now Richard's talents for the world were fit,
He'd no small cunning, and had some small wit;
Had that calm look which seem'd to all assent,
And that complacent speech which nothing meant
He'd but one care, and that he strove to hide,
How best for Richard Monday to provide
Steel, through opposing plates, the magnet draws,
And steely atoms culls from dust and straws;
And thus our hero, to his interest true
Could through all bars and from each trifle drew,
But still more surely round the world to go,
This fortune's child had neither friend nor foe.

Long lost to us, at last our man we trace.—
"Sir Richard Monday died at Monday-place:"
His lady's worth, his daughter's we peruse,
And find his grandsons all as rich as Jews:
He gave reforming charities a sum,
And bought the blessings of the blind and dumb
Bequeathed to missions money from the stocks
And Bibles issued from his private box;
But to his native place severely just,
He left a pittance bound in rigid trust;
Two paltry pounds, on every quarter's-day,
(At church produced) for forty loaves should pay;
A stinted gift, that to the parish shows
He kept in mind their bounty and their woes!

To farmers three, the year has given a son,
Finch on the Moor, and *French*, and *Middleton*.
Twice in this year a female *Giles* I see,
A *Spalding* once, and once a *Barnaby:*
A humble man is *he*, and when they meet,
Our farmers find him on a distant seat;

There for their wit he serves a constant theme,—
"They praise his dairy, they extol his team,
They ask the price of each unrivall'd steed,
And whence his sheep, that admirable breed?
His thriving arts they beg he would explain,
And where he puts the money he must gain.
They have their daughters, but they fear their frene-
Would think his sons too much would condescend:-
They have their sons who would their fortunes try,
But fear his daughters will their suit deny."
So runs the joke, while James, with sigh profound,
And face of care, looks moveless on the ground;
His cares his sighs, provoke the insult more,
And point the jest—for Barnaby is poor.

Last in my list, five untaught lads appear:
Their father dead, compassion sent them here,—
For still that rustic infidel denied
To have their names with solemn rite applied:
His, a lone house, by Deadman's Dyke-way stood;
And his a nightly haunt, in Lonely-wood:
Each village inn has heard the ruffian boast,
That he believed in neither God nor ghost;
That, when the sod upon the sinner press'd,
He, like the saint, had everlasting rest;
That never priest believed his doctrines true,
But would, for profit, own himself a Jew
Or worship wood and stone, as honest heathen do
That fools alone on future worlds rely,
And all who die for faith, deserve to die."

These maxims,—part th' Attorney's Clerk profess'd
His own transcendent genius found the rest.
Our pious matrons heard, and, much amazed,
Gazed on the man, and trembled as they gazed;
And now his face explored, and now his feet,
Man's dreaded foe, in this bad man, to meet:
But him our drunkards as their champion raised,
Their *bishop* call'd, and as their hero praised;
Though most, when sober, and the rest, when sick
Had little question whence his bishoprick.

But he, triumphant spirit! all things dared,
He poach'd the wood, and on the warren snared;
'Twas his, at cards, each novice to trepan,
And call the want of rogues "the rights of man;"
Wild as the winds, he let his offspring rove,
And deem'd the marriage-bond the bane of love.

What age and sickness for a man so bold,
Had done, we know not;—none beheld him old:

By night, as business urged, he sought the wood,—
The ditch was deep,—the rain had caused a flood,—
The foot-bridge fail'd,—he plunged beneath the deep,
And slept, if truth were his, th' eternal sleep.

These have we named; on life's rough sea they sail
With many a prosperous, many an adverse gale!
Where passion soon, like powerful winds, will rage,
And prudence, wearied, with their strength engage:
Then each, in aid, shall some companion ask,
For help or comfort in the tedious task;
And what that help—what joys from union flow,
What good or ill, we next prepare to show;
And row, meantime, our weary bark ashore,
As Spenser his—but not with Spenser's oar

PART II.

MARRIAGES.

Previous Consideration necessary: yet not too long Delay—Imprudent Marriage of old Kirk and his Servant—Comparison between an ancient and youthful Partner to a young Man—Prudence of Donald the Gardener—Parish Wedding—the compelled Bridegroom: Day of Marriage, how spent—Relation of the Accomplishments of Phœbe Dawson, a rustic Beauty: her Lover: his Courtship: their Marriage—Misery of Precipitation—The wealthy Couple: Reluctance in the Husband; why?—Unusually fair Signatures in the Register: the Common Kind—Seduction of Lucy Collins by Footman Daniel: her rustic Lover: her Return to him—An ancient Couple: Comparisons on the occasion—More pleasant view of Village Matrimony: Farmers celebrating the Day of Marriage: their Wives—Reuben and Rachel, a happy Pair: an Example of prudent Delay—Reflections on their State who were not so prudent, and its improvement towards the Termination of Life: an old Man so circumstanced—Attempt to Seduce a Village Beauty: Persuasion and Reply: the Event.

DISPOSED to wed e'en while you hasten, stay;
There's great advantage in a small delay:—
Thus Ovid sang, and much the wise approve
This prudent maxim of the priest of Love:
If poor, delay for future want prepares,
And eases humble life of half its cares;
If rich, delay shall brace the thoughtful mind,
T' endure the ills that e'en the happiest find:
Delay shall knowledge yield on either part,
And show the value of the vanquish'd heart;
The humours, passions, merits, failings prove,
And gently raise the veil that's worn by Love;
Love, that impatient guide!—too proud to think
Of vulgar wants, of clothing, meat and drink,
Urges our amorous swains their joys to seize,
And then, at rags and hunger frighten'd, flees:—
Yet not too long in cold debate remain;
Till age refrain not—but if old, refrain.

By no such rule would Gaffer Kirk be tried;
First in the year he led a blooming bride,
And stood a wither'd elder at her side.

Oh! Nathan! Nathan! at thy years trepann'd,
To take a wanton harlot by the hand!
Thou, who wert used so tartly to express
Thy sense of matrimonial happiness,
Till every youth, whose bans at church were read,
Strove not to meet, or meeting, hung his head;
And every lass forebore at thee to look,
A sly old fish, too cunning for the hook:
And now at sixty, that pert dame to see,
Of all thy savings mistress, and of thee:
Now will the lads, rememb'ring insults past,
Cry, "What, the wise one in the trap at last!"
Fie! Nathan! fie! to let an artful jade
The close recesses of thine heart invade:
What grievous pangs! what suffering she'll impart
And fill with anguish that rebellious heart
For thou wilt strive incessantly in vain,
By threatening speech thy freedom to regain:
But she for conquest married, nor will prove
A dupe to thee, thine anger or thy love;
Clamorous her tongue will be:—of either sex,
She'll gather friends around thee and perplex
Thy doubtful soul;—thy money she will waste
In the vain ramblings of a vulgar taste;
And will be happy to exert her power,
In every eye, in thine, at every hour.
Then wilt thou bluster—"No! I will not rest,
And see consumed each shilling of my chest:"
Thou wilt be valiant,—"When thy cousins call,
I will abuse and shut my door on all:"
Thou wilt be cruel!—"What the law allows,
That be thy portion, my ungrateful spouse!
Nor other shillings shalt thou then receive,
And when I die—What! may I this believe?
Are these true tender tears? and does my Kitty grieve?
Ah! crafty vixen, thine old man has fears;
But weep no more! I'm melted by thy tears;
Spare but my money; thou shalt rule ME still,
And see thy cousins—there! I burn the will."
Thus, with example sad, our year began,
A wanton vixen and a weary man;
"But had this tale in other guise been told,"
Young let the lover be, the lady old.
And that disparity of years shall prove
No bane of peace, although some bar to love:
'Tis not the worst, our nuptial ties among,
That joins the ancient bride and bridegroom young:—
Young wives, like changing winds, their power display
By shifting points and varying day by day;

Now zephyrs mild, now whirlwinds in their 'orce,
They sometimes speed, but often thwart our course;
And much experienced should that pilot be,
Who sails with them on life's tempestuous sea.
But like a trade-wind is the ancient dame,
Mild to your wish and every day the same;
Steady as time, no sudden squalls you fear,
But set full sail and with assurance steer;
Till every danger in your way be past
And then she gently, mildly breathes her last;
Rich you arrive, in port awhile remain,
And for a second venture sail again.

For this, blithe Donald southward made his way,
And left the lasses on the banks of Tay;
Him to a neighbouring garden fortune sent,
Whom we beheld, aspiringly content:
Patient and mild he sought the dame to please,
Who ruled the kitchen and who bore the keys.
Fair Lucy first, the laundry's grace and pride,
With smiles and gracious looks, her fortune tried;
But all in vain she praised his "pawky eyne,"
Where never fondness was for Lucy seen:
Him the mild Susan, boast of dairies, loved,
And found him civil, cautious and unmoved:
From many a fragrant simple, Catherine's skill
Drew oil and essence from the boiling still;
But not her warmth, nor all her winning ways
From his cool phlegm could Donald's spirit raise:
Of beauty heedless, with the merry mute,
To *Mistress Dobson* he preferr'd his suit;
There proved his service, there address'd his vows,
And saw her mistress,—friend,—protectress,—spouse!
A butler now, he thanks his powerful bride,
And, like her keys, keeps constant at her side.

Next at our altar stood a luckless pair,
Brought by strong passions and a warrant there,
By long rent cloak, hung loosely, strove the bride,
From every eye, what all perceived, to hide.
While the boy-bridegroom, shuffling in his pace,
Now hid awhile and then exposed his face;
As shame alternately with anger strove,
The brain confused with muddy ale to move,
In haste and stammering he perform'd his part,
And look'd the rage that rankled in his heart;
(So will each lover inly curse his fate,
Too soon made happy and made wise too late:)
I saw his features take a savage gloom,
And deeply threaten for the days to come.

Low spake the lass, and lisp'd and minced the while,
Look'd on the lad, and faintly tried to smile;
With soften'd speech and humbled tone she strove
To stir the embers of departed love:
While he, a tyrant, frowning walk'd before,
Felt the poor purse, and sought the public door,
She sadly following in submission went,
And saw the final shilling foully spent:
Then to her father's hut the pair withdrew,
And bade to love and comfort long adieu!
Ah! fly temptation, youth, refrain! refrain!
I preach for ever: but I preach in vain!
Two summers since I saw at Lammas Fair,
The sweetest flower that ever blossom'd there,
When *Phœbe Dawson* gaily cross'd the Green
In haste to see and happy to be seen:
Her air, her manners, all who saw admired;
Courteous though coy, and gentle though retired;
The joy of youth and health her eyes display'd,
And ease of heart her every look convey'd;
A native skill her simple robes express'd,
As with untutor'd elegance she dress'd;
The lads around admired so fair a sight,
And Phœbe felt, and felt she gave, delight.
Admirers soon of every age she gain'd,
Her beauty won them and her worth retain'd;
Envy itself could no contempt display,
They wish'd her well, whom yet they wish'd away.
Correct in thought, she judged a servant's place,
Preserved a rustic beauty from disgrace;
But yet on Sunday-eve, in freedom's hour,
With secret joy she felt that beauty's power,
When some proud bliss upon the heart would steal,
That, poor or rich, a beauty still must feel.—
At length the youth ordain'd to move her breast,
Before the swains with bolder spirit press'd;
With looks less timid made his passion known,
And pleased by manners most unlike her own;
Loud though in love, and confident though young;
Fierce in his air, and voluble of tongue;
By trade a tailor, though, in scorn of trade,
He served the 'Squire, and brush'd the coat he made.
Yet now, would Phœbe her consent afford,
Her slave alone, again he'd mount the board;
With her should years of growing love be spent,
And growing wealth:—she sigh'd and look'd consent.
Now, through the lane, up hill, and 'cross the green,
Seen by but few, and blushing to be seen—

Dejected, thoughtful, anxious, and afraid,)
Led by the lover, walk'd the silent maid,
Slow through the meadows roved they, many a mile,
Toy'd by each bank, and trifled at each stile;
Where, as he painted every blissful view,
And highly colour'd what he strongly drew,
The pensive damsel, prone to tender fears,
Dimm'd the false prospect with prophetic tears.—
Thus pass'd th' allotted hours, till lingering late,
The lover loiter'd at the master's gate:
There he pronounced adieu! and yet would stay,
Till chidden—soothed—entreated—forced away;
He would of coldness, though indulged, complain,
And oft retire, and oft return again;
When, if his teasing vex'd her gentle mind,
The grief assumed, compell'd her to be kind!
For he would proof of plighted kindness crave,
That she resented first and then forgave,
And to his grief and penance yielded more
Than his presumption had required before.—
Ah! fly temptation, youth; refrain! refrain!
Each yielding maid and each presuming swain!
Lo! now with red rent cloak and bonnet black,
And torn green gown loose hanging at her back,
One who an infant in her arms sustains,
And seems in patience striving with her pains;
Pinch'd are her looks, as one who pines for bread,
Whose cares are growing and whose hopes are fled;
Pale her parch'd lips, her heavy eyes sunk low,
And tears unnoticed from their channels flow;
Serene her manner, till some sudden pain
Frets the meek soul, and then she's calm again;—
Her broken pitcher to the pool she takes,
And every step with cautious terror makes;
For not alone that infant in her arms,
But nearer cause, her anxious soul alarms.
With water burthen'd, then she picks her way,
Slowly and cautious, in the clinging clay:
Till, in mid-green, she trusts a place unsound,
And deeply plunges in th' adhesive ground;
Thence, but with pain, her slender foot she takes,
While hope the mind as strength the frame forsakes:
For when so full the cup of sorrow grows,
Add but a drop, it instantly o'erflows.
And now her path but not her peace she gains,
Safe from her task, but shivering with her pains:
Her home she reaches, open leaves the door
And placing first her infant on the floor,

She bares her bosom to the wind, and sits,
And sobbing struggles with the rising fits:
In vain, they come, she feels the inflating grief,
That shuts the swelling bosom from relief
That speaks in feeble cries a soul distress'd,
Or the sad laugh that cannot be repress'd
The neighbour-matron leaves her wheel and flies
With all the aid her poverty supplies;
Unfee'd, the calls of Nature she obeys,
Not led by profit, not allured by praise;
And waiting long, till these contentions cease,
She speaks of comfort, and departs in peace.
Friend of distress! the mourner feels thy aid,
She cannot pay thee, but thou wilt be paid.
But who this child of weakness, want and care?
'Tis *Phœbe Dawson*, pride of Lammas Fair:
Who took her lover for his sparkling eyes,
Expressions warm, and love-inspiring lies:
Compassion first assail'd her gentle heart,
For all his suffering, all his bosom's smart:
"And then his prayers! they would a savage move,
And win the coldest of the sex to love:"—
But ah! too soon his looks success declared,
Too late her loss the marriage-rite repair'd;
The faithless flatterer then his vows forgot,
A captious tyrant or a noisy sot:
If present, railing, till he saw her pain'd;
If absent, spending what their labours gain'd:
Till that fair form in want and sickness pined,
And hope and comfort fled that gentle mind.
Then fly temptation, youth; resist, refrain!
Nor let me preach for ever and in vain!
Next came a well-dress'd pair, who left their coach,
And made, in long procession, slow approach:
For this gay bride had many a female friend,
And youths were there, this favour'd youth t' attend
Silent, nor wanting due respect, the crowd
Stood humbly round, and gratulation bow'd;
But not that silent crowd, in wonder fix'd,
Not numerous friends, who praise and envy mix'd,
Nor nymphs attending near to swell the pride
Of one more fair, the ever-smiling bride;
Nor that gay bride, adorn'd with every grace,
Nor love nor joy triumphant in her face,
Could, from the youth's, sad signs of sorrow chase:
Why didst thou grieve? wealth, pleasure, freedom, thine
Vex'd it thy soul, that freedom to resign?
Spake Scandal truth? "Thou didst not then intend
So soon to bring thy wooing to an end?"

Or, was it, as our prating rustics say,
To end as soon, but in a different way?
'Tis told thy Phillis is a skilful dame,
Who play'd uninjured with the dangerous flame:
That, while, like Lovelace, thou thy coat display'd,
And hid the snare for her affection laid,
Thee, with her net, she found the means to catch,
And at the amorous see-saw, won the match:
Yet others tell, the captain fix'd thy doubt,
He'd call thee brother, or he'd call thee out:—
But rest the motive—all retreat too late,
Joy like thy bride's should on thy brow have sate;
The deed had then appear'd thine own intent,
A glorious day, by gracious fortune sent,
In each revolving year to be in triumph spent.
Then in few weeks that cloudy brow had been
Without a wonder or a whisper seen;
And none had been so weak as to enquire,
"Why pouts my Lady?" or "why frowns the Squire?
How fair these names, how much unlike they look
To all the blurr'd subscriptions in my book:
The bridegroom's letters stand in row above,
Tapering yet stout, like pine-trees in his grove;
While free and fine the bride's appear below,
As light and slender as her jasmines grow.
Mark now in what confusion, stoop or stand,
The crooked scrawls of many a clownish hand;
Now out, now in, they droop, they fall, they rise,
Like raw recruits drawn forth for exercise;
Ere yet reform'd, and modell'd by the drill,
The free-born legs stand striding as they will.
Much have I tried to guide the first along,
But still the blunderers placed their blottings wrong:—
Behold these marks uncouth! how strange that men
Who guide the plough, should fail to guide the pen:
For half a mile, the furrows even lie;
For half an inch the letters stand awry:—
Our peasants, strong and sturdy in the field,
Cannot these arms of idle students wield.
Like them, in feudal days, their valiant lords
Resign'd the pen, and grasp'd their conqu'ring swords;
They to robed clerks and poor dependent men
Left the light duties of the peaceful pen:
Nor to their ladies wrote, but sought to prove,
By deeds of death, their hearts were fill'd with love
But yet, small arts have charms for female eyes;
Our rustic nymphs the beau and scholar prize;
Unletter'd swains and ploughmen coarse they slight
For those who dress and amorous scrolls indite.

For *Lucy Collins* happier days had been,
Had Footman Daniel scorn'd his native green;
Or when he came an idle coxcomb down,
Had he his love reserved for lass in town;
To Stephen Hill she then had pledged her truth,—
A sturdy, sober, kind, unpolish'd youth;
But from the day, that fatal day she spied
The pride of Daniel, Daniel was her pride.
In all concerns was Stephen just and true,
But coarse his doublet was and patch'd in view,
And felt his stockings were, and blacker than his shoe;
While Daniel's linen all was fine and fair,—
His master wore it, and he deign'd to wear:
(To wear his livery, some respect might prove;
To wear his linen, must be sign of love:)
Blue was his coat, unsoil'd by spot or stain:
His hose were silk, his shoes of Spanish grain;
A silver knot his breadth of shoulder bore;
A diamond buckle blazed his breast before—
Diamond he swore it was! and show'd it as he swore,
Rings on his fingers shone; his milk-white hand
Could pick-tooth case and box for snuff command:
And thus, with clouded cane, a fop complete,
He stalk'd, the jest and glory of the street.
Join'd with these powers, he could so sweetly sing,
Talk with such toss, and saunter with such swing;
Laugh with such glee, and trifle with such art,
That Lucy's promise fail'd to shield her heart.

Stephen, meantime, to ease his amorous cares,
Fix'd his full mind upon his farm's affairs;
Two pigs, a cow, and wethers half a score
Increased his stock, and still he look'd for more.
He, for his acres few, so duly paid,
That yet more acres to his lot were laid;
Till our chaste nymphs no longer felt disdain,
And prudent matrons praised the frugal swain;
Who thriving well, through many a fruitful year,
Now clothed himself anew, and acted overseer.

Just then poor Lucy, from her friend in town,
Fled in pure fear and came a beggar down;
Trembling, at Stephen's door she knock'd for bread,—
Was chidden first, next pitied, and then fed;
Then sat at Stephen's board, then shared in Stephen's bed:
All hope of marriage lost in her disgrace,
He mourns a flame revived, and she a love of lace.

Now to be wed a well match'd couple came;
Twice had old *Lodge* been tied, and twice the dame;
Tottering they came and toying, (odious scene!)
And fond and simple, as they'd always been.

Children from wedlock—we by laws restrain;
Why not prevent them, when they're such again?
Why not forbid the doting souls to prove
Th' indecent fondling of preposterous love?
In spite of prudence, uncontroll'd by shame,
The amorous senior woos the toothless dame,
Relating idly, at the closing eve,
The youthful follies he disdains to leave;
Till youthful follies wake a transient fire,
When arm in arm they totter and retire.
So a fond pair of solemn birds, all day,
Blink in their seat and doze the hours away:
Then by the moon awaken'd, forth they move,
And fright the songsters with their cheerless love.
So two sear trees, dry, stunted, and unsound,
Each other catch, when dropping to the ground;
Entwine their wither'd arms 'gainst wind and weather
And shake their leafless heads and drop together.
So two cold limbs, touch'd by Galvani's wire,
Move with new life, and feel awaken'd fire;
Quivering awhile, their flaccid forms remain,
Then turn to cold torpidity again.
"But ever frowns your Hymen? man and maid,
Are all repenting, suffering or betray'd?
Forbid it, Love! we have our couples here
Who hail the day in each revolving year.
These are with us, as in the world around,
They are not frequent, but they may be found.
Our farmers too, what though they fail to prize,
In Hymen's bonds, the tenderest slaves of love.
(Nor, like those pairs whom sentiment unites
Feel they the fervour of the mind's delights;)
Yet coarsely kind and comfortably gay,
They heap the board and hail the happy day:
And though the bride, now freed from school, admits
Of pride implanted there, some transient fits:
Yet soon she casts her girlish flights aside,
And in substantial blessings rests her pride.
No more she moves in measured steps; no more
Runs, with bewilder'd ear, her music o'er;
No more recites her French the hinds among,
But chides her maidens in her mother-tongue;
Her tambour-frame she leaves and diet spare,
Plain work and plenty with her house to share;
Till, all her varnish lost in few short years,
In all her worth the farmer's wife appears.
Yet not the ancient kind; nor she who gave
Her soul to gain—a mistress and a slave:

Who not to sleep allow'd the needful time;
To whom repose was loss, and sport a crime;
Who, in her meanest room (and all were mean),
A noisy drudge, from morn till night was seen;—
But she, the daughter, boasts a decent room,
Adorn'd with carpet formed in Wilton's loom;
Fair prints along the paper'd wall are spread;
There, Werter sees the sportive children fed,
And Charlotte, here, bewails her lover dead.

'Tis here, assembled, while in space apart
Their husbands, drinking, warm the opening heart,
Our neighbouring dames, on festal days, unite,
With tongues more fluent and with hearts as light,
Theirs is that art, which English wives alone
Profess—a boast and privilege their own;
An art it is where each at once attends
To all, and claims attention from her friends,
When they engage the tongue, the eye, the ear,
Reply when list'ning, and when speaking hear:
The ready converse knows no dull delays,
'But double are the pains, and double be the praise"

Yet not to those alone who bear command
Heaven gives a heart to hail the marriage band;
Among their servants, we the pairs can show,
Who much to love, and more to prudence owe:
Reuben and *Rachel*, though as fond as doves,
Were yet discreet and cautious in their loves:
Nor would attend to Cupid's wild commands,
Till cool reflection bade them join their hands:
When both were poor, they thought it argued ill
Of hasty love to make them poorer still:
Year after year, with savings long laid by,
They bought the future dwelling's full supply;
Her frugal fancy cull'd the smaller ware,
The weightier purchase ask'd her Reuben's care;
Together then their last year's gain they threw,
And lo! an auction'd bed, with curtains neat and new.

Thus both, as prudence counsell'd, wisely stay'd,
And cheerful then the calls of Love obey'd:
What if, when Rachel gave her hand, 'twas one
Embrown'd by Winter's ice and Summer's sun?
What if, in Reuben's hair the female eye
Usurping grey among the black could spy?
What if, in both, life's bloomy flush was lost,
And their full autumn felt the mellowing frost?
Yet time, who blow'd the rose of youth away,
Had left the vigorous stem without decay:
Like those tall elms, in Farmer Frankford's ground,
They'll grow no more,—but all their growth is sound

By time confirm'd and rooted in the land.
The storms they've stood, still promise they shall stand.
These are the happier pairs, their life has rest,
Their hopes are strong, their humble portion blest,
While those more rash to hasty marriage led,
Lament th' impatience which now stints their bread:
When such their union, years their cares increase,
Their love grows colder, and their pleasures cease,
In health just fed, in sickness just relieved;
By hardships harass'd and by children grieved;
In petty quarrels and in peevish strife,
The once fond couple waste the spring of life:
But when to age mature those children grown,
Find hopes and homes and hardships of their own,
The harass'd couple feel their lingering woes
Receding slowly, till they find repose.
Complaints and murmurs then are laid aside,
(By reason these subdued, and those by pride:)
And taught by care, the patient man and wife
Agree to share the bitter-sweet of life!
(Life that has sorrow much and sorrow's cure,
Where they who most enjoy shall much endure:)
Their rest, their labours, duties, sufferings, prayers,
Compose the soul, and fit it for its cares:
Their graves before them and their griefs behind,
Have each a medicine for the rustic mind:
Nor has he care to whom his wealth shall go,
Or who shall labour with his spade and hoe:
But as he lends the strength that yet remains,
And some dead neighbour on his bier sustains,
(One with whom oft he whirl'd the bounding flail,
Toss'd the broad coit, or took th' inspiring ale,)
"For me," (he meditates,) "shall soon be done
This friendly duty, when my race be run:
'T was first in trouble as in error past,
Dark clouds and stormy cares whole years o'ercast,
But calm my setting day, and sunshine smiles at last
My vices punish'd and my follies spent,
Not loth to die, but yet to live content,
I rest:"—then casting on the grave his eye,
His friend compels a tear, and his own griefs a sigh
Last on my list appears a match of love,
And one of Virtue,—happy may it prove!—
Sir *Edward Archer* is an amorous knight,
And maidens chaste and lovely shun his sight,
His bailiff's daughter suited much his taste,
For *Fanny Price* was lovely and was chaste;

To her the Knight with gentle looks drew near,
And timid voice assumed, to banish fear:—
"Hope of my life, dear sovereign of my breast,
Which, since I knew thee, knows not joy nor rest;
Know, thou art all that my delighted eyes,
My fondest thoughts, my proudest wishes prize
And is that bosom—(what on earth so fair!)
To cradle some coarse peasant's sprawling heir,
To be that pillow which some surly swain
May treat with scorn and agonise with pain?
Art thou, sweet maid, a ploughman's wants to share,
To dread his insult, to support his care;
To hear his follies, his contempt to prove,
And (oh! the torment!) to endure his love;
Till want and deep regret those charms destroy,
That time would spare, if time were pass'd in joy?
With him, in varied pains, from morn till night,
Your hours shall pass; yourself a ruffian's right;
Your softest bed shall be the knotted wool;
Your purest drink the waters of the pool:
Your sweetest food will but your life sustain,
And your best pleasure be a rest from pain;
While, through each year, as health and strength abate
You'll weep your woes, and wonder at your fate;
And cry, 'Behold,' as life's last cares come on,
My burthens growing when my strength is gone.'
Now turn with me, and all the young desire,
That taste can form, that fancy can require;
All that excites enjoyment, or procures
Wealth, health, respect, delight, and love, are yours:
Sparkling, in cups of gold, your wines shall flow,
Grace that fair hand, in that dear bosom glow;
Fruits of each clime, and flowers, through all the year
Shall on your walls and in your walks appear:
Where all beholding, shall your praise repeat,
No fruit so tempting and no flower so sweet:
The softest carpets in your room shall lie,
Pictures of happiest loves shall meet your eye,
And tallest mirrors reaching to the floor,
Shall show you all the object I adore:
Who, by the hands of wealth and fashion dress'd,
By slaves attended and by friends caress'd,
Shall move, a wonder, through the public ways,
And hear the whispers of adoring praise.
Your female friends, though gayest of the gay
Shall see you happy, and shall, sighing, say,
While smother'd envy rises in the breast,—
'Oh! that we lived so beauteous and so blest.'

"Come, then, my mistress, and my wife; for she
Who trusts my honour is the wife for me:
Your slave, your husband, and your friend employ,
In search of pleasures we may both enjoy."
To this the Damsel, meekly firm, replied:
"My mother loved, was married, toil'd, and died;
With joys, she'd griefs, had troubles in her course,
But not one grief was pointed by remorse;
My mind is fix'd, to Heaven I resign,
And be her love, her life, her comforts mine."
Tyrants have wept; and those with hearts of steel,
Unused the anguish of the heart to heal,
Have yet the transient power of virtue known,
And felt th' imparted joy promote their own.
Our Knight relenting, now befriends a youth,
Who to the yielding maid had vow'd his truth;
And finds in that fair deed a sacred joy,
That will not perish, and that cannot cloy;—
A living joy, that shall its spirit keep,
When every beauty fades, and all the passions sleep.

PART III.

BURIALS.

True Christian Resignation not frequently to be seen—The Register a melancholy Record—A dying Man, who at length sends for a Priest; for what Purpose? answered—Old Collet of the Inn, an Instance of Dr. Young's slow-sudden Death: his Character and Conduct—The Manners and Management of the Widow Goe: her successful Attention to Business: her Decease unexpected—The Infant-Boy of Gerard Ablett dies: Reflections on his Death, and the Survivor his Sister-Twin—The Funeral of the deceased Lady of the Manor described: her neglected Mansion: Undertaker and Train: the Character which her Monument will hereafter display—Burial of an ancient Maiden: some former drawback on her Virgin-Fame: Description of her House and Household: her Manners, Apprehensions, Death—Isaac Ashford, a virtuous peasant, dies: his manly Character: Reluctance to enter the Poor-House; and why—Misfortune and Derangement of Intellect in Robin Dingley: whence they proceeded: he is not restrained by Misery from a wandering Life: his various Returns to his Parish: his final Return—Wife of Farmer Frankford dies in Prime of Life: Affliction in Consequence of such Death: melancholy View of her House, &c. on her Family's Return from her Funeral: Address to Sorrow—Leah Cousins, a Midwife: her Character: and successful Practice: at length opposed by Dr. Glibb: Opposition in the Parish; Argument of the Doctor: of Leah: her Failure and Decease—Burial of Roger Cuff, a Sailor: his Enmity to his Family: how it originated:—his Experiment and its Consequence—The Register terminates—A Bell heard: Enquiry for whom? The Sexton—Character of old Dibble, and the five Rectors whom he served—Reflections—Conclusion.

THERE was, 't is said, and I believe, a time,
When humble Christians died with views sublime;
When all were ready for their faith to bleed,
But few to write or wrangle for their creed;
When lively Faith upheld the sinking heart,
And friends, assured to meet, prepared to part;
When Love felt hope, when Sorrow grew serene,
And all was comfort in the death-bed scene.

Alas! when now the gloomy king they wait,
'Tis weakness yielding to restless fate:
Like wretched men upon the ocean cast,
They labour hard and struggle to the last:
"Hope against hope," and wildly gaze around,
In search of help that never shall be found:
Nor, till the last strong billow stops the breath,
Will they believe them in the jaws of Death!

When these my Records I reflecting read,
And find what ills these numerous births succeed
What powerful griefs these nuptial ties attend,
With what regret these painful journeys end;
When from the cradle to the grave I look,
Mine I conceive a melancholy book.
Where now is perfect resignation seen?
Alas! it is not on the village-green:
I've seldom known, though I have often read
Of happy peasants on their dying-bed;
Whose looks proclaim'd that sunshine of the breast
That more than hope, that Heaven itself express'd.
What I behold are feverish fits of strife,
'Twixt fears of dying and desire of life:
Those earthly hopes, that to the last endure;
Those fears, that hopes superior fail to cure:
At best a sad submission to the doom,
Which, turning from the danger, lets it come
Sick lies the man, bewilder'd, lost, afraid
His spirits vanquish'd and his strength decay'd;
No hope the friend, the nurse, the doctor lend—
"Call then a priest, and fit him for his end."
A priest is call'd; 't is now, alas! too late.
Death enters with him at the cottage-gate.
Or time allow'd—he goes, assured to find
The self-commending, all-confiding mind;
And sighs to hear, what we may justly call
Death's common-place the trum of thought in all.
"True, I'm a sinner," feebly he begins,
"But trust in Mercy to forgive my sins."
(Such cool confession no past crimes excite!
Such claim on Mercy seems the sinner's right!)
'I know, mankind are frail, that God is just,
And pardons those who in his mercy trust;
We're sorely tempted in a world like this;
All men have done, and I like all, amiss;
But now, if spared, it is my full intent
On all the past to ponder and repent:
Wrongs against me I pardon great and small,
And if I die, I die in peace with all."
His merits thus and not his sins confess'd.
He speaks his hopes, and leaves to Heaven the rest
Alas! are these the prospects dull and cold,
That dying Christians to their priests unfold?
Or mends the prospect when th' enthusiast cries,
"I die assured!" and in a rapture dies?
Ah, where that humble, self-abasing mind,
With that confiding spirit, shall we find;

The mind that, feeling what repentance brings,
Dejection's terrors and Contrition's stings,
Feels then the hope, that mounts all care above.
And the pure joy that flows from pardoning love?
Such have I seen in Death, and much deplore,
So many dying—that I see no more:
Lo! now my Records, where I grieve to trace,
How Death has triumph'd in so short a space;
Who are the dead, how died they, I relate,
And snatch some portion of their acts from fate.
With *Andrew Collett* we the year begin,
The blind, fat landlord of the Old Crown Inn.—
Big as his butt, and for the self-same use,
To take in stores of strong fermenting juice.
On his huge chair beside the fire he sate,
In revel chief and umpire in debate;
Each night his string of vulgar tales he told;
When ale was cheap and bachelors were bold:
His heroes all were famous in their days,
Cheats were his boast and dunkards had his praise;
"One in three draughts three mugs of ale took down
As mugs were then—tho champion of the Crown
For thrice three days another lived on ale,
And knew no change but that of mild and stale;
Two thirsty soakers watch'd a vessel's side,
When he the tap, with dext'rous hand, applied;
Nor from their seats departed till they found
That butt was out and heard the mournful sound."
He praised the poacher, precious child of fun!
Who shot the keeper with his own spring-gun;
Nor less the smuggler who the exciseman tied,
And left him hanging at the birch-wood side,
There to expire;—but one who saw him hang
Cut the good cord—a traitor of the gang.
His own exploits, with boastful glee he told,
What ponds he emptied and what pikes he sold;
And how, when blest with sight alert and gay,
The night's amusements kept him through the day
He sang the praises of these times, when all
"For cards and dice, as for their drink, might call:
When justice wink'd on every jovial crew,
And ten-pins tumbled in the parson's view."
He told, when angry wives, provoked to rail,
Or drive a third-day drunkard from his ale,
What were his triumphs, and how great the skill
That won the vex'd virago to his will;
Who raving came;—Then talk'd in milder strain,—
Then wept, then drank, and pledged her spouse again.

Such were his themes; how knaves o'er laws prevail
Or, when made captives, how they fly from jail;
The young how brave, how subtle were the old:
And oaths attested all that folly told.
On death like his what name shall we bestow,
So very sudden! yet so very slow?
'T was slow:—Disease, augmenting year by year,
Show'd the grim king by gradual steps brought near:
'T was not less sudden: in the night he died,
He drank, he swore, he jested, and he lied;
Thus aiding folly with departing breath:—
"Beware Lorenzo, the slow-sudden death."
Next died *the Widow Goe*, an active dame,
Famed ten miles round, and worthy all her fame;
She lost her husband when her loves were young,
But kept her farm, her credit, and her tongue:
Full thirty years she ruled, with matchless skill,
With guiding judgment and resistless will;
Advice she scorn'd, rebellions she suppress'd,
And sons and servants bow'd at her behest.
Like the great man's, who to his Saviour came,
Were the strong words of this commanding dame;
"Come," if she said, they came; if "go," were gone;
And if "do this,"—that instant it was done:
Her maidens told she was all eye and ear,
In darkness saw and could at distance hear;—
No parish business in the place could stir,
Without direction or assent from her;
In turn she took each office as it fell,
Knew all their duties and discharged them well;
The lazy vagrants in her presence shook,
And pregnant damsels fear'd her stern rebuke:
She look'd on want with judgment clear and cool,
And felt with reason and bestow'd by rule;
She match'd both sons and daughters to her mind,
And lent them eyes, for Love, she heard, was blind;
Yet ceaseless still she throve, alert, alive,
The working bee, in full or empty hive;
Busy and careful, like that working bee.
No time for love nor tender cares had she;
But when our farmers made their amorous vows,
She talk'd of market-steeds and patent-ploughs.
Not unemploy'd her evenings pass'd away,
Amusement closed, as business waked the day;
When to her toilet's brief concern she ran,
And conversation with her friends began,
Who all were welcome, what they saw, to share;
And joyous neighbours praised her Christmas fare,

That none around might, in their scorn, complain
Of Gossip Goe, as greedy in her gain.
Thus long she reign'd, admired, if not approved;
Praised, if not honour'd; fear'd, if not beloved;
When, as the busy days of Spring drew near,
That call'd for all the forecast of the year:
When lively hope the rising crops survey'd,
And April promised what September paid;
When stray'd her lambs where gorse and green weed grew,
When rose her grass in richer vales below;
When pleased she look'd on all the smiling land,
And view'd the hinds who wrought at her command
(Poultry in groups still follow'd where she went:)
Then dread o'ercame her,—that her days were spent
"Bless me! I die, and not a warning giv'n—
With *much* to do on Earth, and ALL for Heav'n!—
No reparation for my soul's affairs,
No leave petition'd for the barn's repairs.
Accounts perplex'd, my interest yet unpaid,
My mind unsettled, and my will unmade:—
A lawyer haste, and in your way a priest:
And let me die in one good work at least."
She spake, and, trembling, dropp'd upon her knees
Heaven in her eye and in her hand her keys;
And still the more she found her life decay,
With greater force she grasp'd those signs of sway,
Then fell and died!—In haste her sons drew near,
And dropp'd, in haste, the tributary tear,
Then from th' adhering clasp the keys unbound,
And consolation for their sorrows found.
Death has his infant-train; his bony arm
Strikes from the baby-cheek the rosy charm;
The brightest eye his glazing film makes dim,
And his cold touch sets fast the lithest limb:
He seized the sick'ning boy to *Gerard* lent
When three days' life, in feeble cries, were spent;
In pain brought forth; those painful hours to stay
To breathe in pain and sigh its soul away!
"But why thus lent, if thus recall'd again,
To cause and feel, to live and die in, pain?"
Or rather say, Why grievous these appear,
If all it pays for Heaven's eternal year;
If these sad sobs and piteous sighs secure
Delights that live, when worlds no more endure?
The sister-spirit long may lodge below,
And pains from nature, pains from reason, know
Through all the common ills of life may run,
By hope perverted, and by love undone:

A wife's distress, a mother's pangs, may dread,
And widow-tears, in bitter anguish, shed;
May at old age arrive through numerous harms
With children's children in those feeble arms:
Nor till by years of want and grief oppress'd
Shall the sad spirit flee and be at rest!

Yet happier therefore shall we deem the boy,
Secured from anxious care and dangerous joy?

Not so! for then would Love Divine in vain
Send all the burthens weary men sustain;
All that now curb the passions when they rage,
The cheeks of youth and the regrets of age;
All that now bid us hope, believe, endure,
Our sorrow's comfort and our vice's cure:
All that for Heaven's high joys the spirits train,
And charity, the crown of all, were vain.

Say, will you call the breathless infant blest,
Because no cares the silent grave molest?
So would you deem the nursling from the wing
Untimely thrust and never train'd to sing:
But far more blest the bird whose grateful voice
Sings its own joy and makes the woods rejoice,
Though, while untaught, ere yet he e arn'd the ear
Hard were his trials and his pains severe!

Next died the LADY who yon Hall possess'd;
And here they brought her noble bones to rest.
In Town she dwelt;—forsaken stood the Hall:
Worms ate the floors, the tapestry fled the wall:
No fire the kitchen's cheerless grate display'd,
No cheerful light the long-closed sash convey'd,
The crawling worm, that turns a summer-fly,
Here spun his shroud and laid him up to die
The winter-death:—upon the bed of state,
The bat shrill shrieking woo'd his flickering mate;
To empty rooms the curious came no more,
From empty cellars turn'd the angry poor,
And surly beggars cursed the ever-bolted door.
To one small room the steward found his way,
Where tenants follow'd to complain and pay;
Yet no complaint before the Lady came,
The feeling servant spared the feeble dame;
Who saw her farms with his observing eyes,
And answer'd all requests with his replies:—
She came not down, her falling groves to view;
Why should she know, what one so faithful knew?
Why come, from many clamorous tongues to hear
What one so just might whisper in her ear?
Her oaks or acres, why with care explore:
Why learn the wants, the sufferings of the poor;

When one so knowing all their worth could trace,
And one so piteous govern'd in her place?
Lo! now, what dismal Sons of Darkness come,
To bear this Daughter of Indulgence home;
Tragedians all, and well-arranged in black!
Who nature, feeling, force, expression lack;
Who cause no tear, but gloomily pass by,
And shake their sables in the wearied eye,
That turns disgusted from the pompous scene,
Proud without grandeur, with profusion, mean!
The tear for kindness past affection owes:
For worth deceased the sigh from reason flows:
E'en well-feign'd passion for our sorrows call,
And real tears for mimic miseries fall.
But this poor farce has neither truth nor art,
To please the fancy or to touch the heart:
Unlike the darkness of the sky, that pours
On the dry ground its fertilising showers:
Unlike to that which strikes the soul with dread,
When thunders roar and forky fires are shed:
Dark but not awful, dismal but yet mean.
With anxious bustle moves the cumbrous scene;
Presents no objects tender or profound,
But spreads its cold unmeaning gloom around.
When woes are feign'd, how ill such forms appear!
And oh! how needless, when the woe's sincere
Slow to the vault they come, with heavy tread,
Bending beneath the Lady and her lead:
A case of elm surrounds that ponderous chest,
Close on that case the crimson velvet's press'd;
Ungenerous this, that to the worm denies,
With niggard caution, his appointed prize;
For now, ere yet he works his tedious way,
Through cloth and wood and metal to his prey,
That prey dissolving shall a mass remain,
That fancy loathes and worms themselves disdain.
But see! the master-mourner makes his way,
To end his office for the coffin'd clay;
Pleased that our rustic men and maids behold
His plate like silver, and his studs like gold,
As they approach to spell the age, the name,
And all the titles of th' illustrious dame.—
This as (my duty done) some scholar read,
A Village-father look'd disdain and said:
"Away, my friends! why take such pains to know
What some brave marble soon in Church shall show?
Where not alone her gracious name shall stand,
But how she lived—the blessing of the land;

How much we all deplored the noble dead,
What groans we utter'd and what tears we shed;
Tears, true as those, which in the sleepy eyes
Of weeping cherubs on the stone shall rise;
Tears, true as those which, ere she found her grave,
The noble Lady to our sorrows gave."

Down by the church-way walk, and where the brook
Winds round the chancel like a shepherd's crook;
In that small house, with those green pales before,
Where jasmine trails on either side the door,
Where those dark shrubs, that now grow wild at will,
Were clipp'd in form and tantal'sed with skill;
Where cockles branch'd and pebbles neatly spread,
Form'd shining borders for the larkspurs' bed;—
There lived a Lady, wise, austere, and nice,
Who show'd her virtue by her scorn of vice;
In the dear fashions of her youth she dress'd,
A pea-green Joseph was her favourite vest:
Erect she stood, she walk'd with stately mien,
Tight was her length of stays, and she was tall and lean

There long she lived in maiden-state immured,
From looks of love and treacherous man secured;
Though evil fame—(but that was long before)
Had blown her dubious blast at *Catherine's* door.
A Captain thither, rich from India came,
And though a *cousin* call'd, it touch'd her fame:
Her annual stipend rose from his behest,
And all the long-prized treasures she possess'd:—
If aught like joy awhile appear'd to stay
In that stern face, and chase those frowns away;
'Twas when her treasures she disposed for view
And heard the praises to their splendour due;
Silks beyond price, so rich, they'd stand alone,
And diamonds blazing on the buckled zone;
Rows of rare pearls by curious workmen set,
And bracelets fair in box of glossy jet;
Bright polish'd amber precious from its size,
Or forms the fairest fancy could devise:
Her drawers of cedar, shut with secret springs,
Conceal'd the watch of gold and rubied rings;
Letters, long proofs of love, and verses fine
Round the pink'd rims of crisped valentine.
Her china-closet, cause of daily care,
For woman's wonder held her pencill'd ware;
That pictured wealth of China and Japan,
Like its cold mistress, shunn'd the eye of man.

Her neat small room, adorn'd with maiden-taste,
A clipp'd French puppy, first of favourites, graced;

A parrot next, but dead and stuff'd with art,
(For Poll, when living, lost the Lady's heart,
And then his life: for he was heard to speak
Such frightful words as tinged his Lady's cheek:)
Unhappy bird! who had no power to prove,
Save by such speech, his gratitude and love.
A grey old cat his whiskers lick'd beside;
A type of sadness in the house of pride.
The polish'd surface of an India chest,
A glassy globe, in frame of ivory, press'd.
Where swam two finny creatures: one of gold,
Of silver one; both beauteous to behold:—
All these were form'd the guiding taste to suit;
The beast well-manner'd and the fishes mute.
A widow'd Aunt was there, compell'd by need
The nymph to flatter and her tribe to feed;
Who, veiling well her scorn, endured the clog,
Mute as the fish and fawning as the dog.

As years increased, these treasures, her delight,
Arose in value in their owner's sight:
A miser knows that, view it as he will,
A guinea kept is but a guinea still:
And so he puts it to its proper use,
That something more this guinea may produce;
But silks and rings, in the possessor's eyes,
The oft'ner seen, the more in value rise,
And thus are wisely hoarded to bestow
The kind of pleasure that with years will grow.

But what avail'd their worth—if worth had they,—
In the sad summer of her slow decay?

Then we beheld her turn an anxious look
From trunks and chests, and fix'd it on her book,—
A rich-bound Book of Prayer the Captain gave.
(Some Princess had it, or was said to have,)
And then once more, on all her stores, look round,
And draw a sigh so piteous and profound,
That told, "Alas! how hard from these to part,
And for new hopes and habits form the heart!
What shall I do (she cried), my peace of mind,
To gain in dying, and to die resign'd!"

"Hear," we return'd;—"these baubles cast aside
Nor give thy God a rival in thy pride;
Thy closets shut, and ope thy kitchen's door;
There own thy failings, *here* invite the poor;
A friend of Mammon let thy bounty make;
For widow's prayers, thy vanities forsake;
And let the hungry, of thy pride partake,
Then shall thy inward eye with joy survey
The angel Mercy tempering Death's delay!"

Alas! twas hard,—the treasures still had charms,
Hope still its flattery, sickness its alarms;
Still was the same unsettled, clouded view,
And the same plaintive cry, "What shall I do?"
Nor change appear'd; for when her race was run
Doubtful we all exclaimed, "What has been done?
Apart she lived, and still she lies alone.
Yon earthy heap awaits the flattering stone,
On which invention shall be long employ'd,
To show the various worth of *Catherine Lloyd*.

Next to these ladies, but in nought allied,
A noble peasant, *Isaac Ashford*, died.
Noble he was, contemning all things mean,
His truth unquestion'd and his soul serene:
Of no man's presence Isaac felt afraid;
At no man's question Isaac look'd dismay'd:
Shame knew him not, he dreaded no disgrace;
Truth, simple truth, was written in his face:
Yet while the serious thought his soul approved,
Cheerful he seem'd, and gentleness he loved,
To bliss domestic he his heart resign'd,
And with the firmest had the fondest mind:
Were others joyful, he look'd smiling on,
And gave allowance where he needed none;
Good he refused with future ill to buy,
Nor knew a joy that caused reflection's sigh;
A friend to virtue, his unclouded breast
No envy stung, no jealousy distress'd;
(Bane of the poor! it wounds their weaker mind,
To miss one favour, which their neighbours find):
Yet far was he from stoic pride removed,
He felt humanely, and he warmly loved:
I mark'd his action, when his infant died,
And his old neighbour for offence was tried;
The still tears, stealing down that furrow'd cheek,
Spoke pity, plainer than the tongue can speak.
If pride were his, 'twas not their vulgar pride
Who, in their base contempt, the great deride;
Nor pride in learning,—though my Clerk agreed,
If fate should call him, Ashford might succeed;
Nor pride in rustic skill, although we knew,
None his superior, and his equals few:—
But if that spirit in his soul had place,
It was the jealous pride that shuns disgrace;
A pride in honest fame, by virtue gain'd,
In sturdy boys to virtuous labours train'd.
Pride in the power that guards his country's coast
And all that Englishmen enjoy and boast;

Pride, in a life that slander's tongue defied,—
In fact a noble passion, misnamed Pride.
He had no party's rage, no sect'ry's whim:
Christian and countrymen was all with him:
True to his church he came; no Sunday-shower
Kept him at home in that important hour;
Nor his firm feet could one persuading sect,
By the strong glare of their new light direct;
"On hope, in mine own sober light, I gaze,
But should be blind, and lose it, in your blaze."
In times severe, when many a sturdy swain
Felt it his pride, his comfort, to complain:
Isaac their wants would soothe, his own would hide,
And feel in *that* his comfort and his pride.
At length he found, when seventy years were run,
His strength departed, and his labour done:
When he, save honest fame, retain'd no more,
But lost his wife, and saw his children poor;
'Twas then, a spark of—say not discontent—
Struck on his mind, and thus he gave it vent:—
"Kind are your laws, (tis not to be denied,)
That in yon House, for ruin'd age, provide,
And they are just;—when young, we give you all,
And for assistance in our weakness call.—
Why then this proud reluctance to be fed,
To join your poor, and eat the parish-bread?
But yet I linger, loth with him to feed,
Who gains his plenty by the sons of need;
He who, by contract, all your paupers took,
And guages stomachs with an anxious look:
On some old master I could well depend;
See him with joy and thank him as a friend;
But ill on him, who doles the day's supply,
And counts our chances who at night may die:
Yet help me, Heav'n! and let me not complain
Of what I suffer, but my fate sustain."
Such were his thoughts, and so resign'd he grew;
Daily he placed the Workhouse in his view!
But came not there, for sudden was his fate,
He dropp'd, expiring, at his cottage gate.
I feel his absence in the hours of prayer,
And view his seat and sigh for Isaac there:
I see no more those white locks thinly spread
Round the bald polish of that honour'd head;
No more that awful glance on playful wight,
Compell'd to kneel and tremble at the sight,
To fold his fingers, all in dread the while,
Till Mister Ashford soften'd to a smile;

No more that meek and suppliant look in prayer,
Nor the pure faith (to give it force), are there;—
But he is blest, and I lament no more
A wise good man contented to be poor.

Then died a Rambler: not the one who sails
And trucks, for female favours, beads and nails;
Not one, who posts from place to place—of men
And manners treating with a flying pen;
Not he, who climbs, for prospects, Snowdon's height,
And chides the clouds that intercept the sight;
No curious shell, rare plant, or brilliant spar,
Enticed our traveller from his home so far;
But all the reason, by himself assign'd
For so much rambling, was, a restless mind;
As on, from place to place, without intent,
Without reflection, *Robin Dingley* went.

Not thus by nature:—never man was found
Less prone to wander from his parish bound:
Claudian's Old Man, to whom all scenes were new,
Save those where he and where his apples grew,
Resembled Robin, who around would look,
And his horizon for the earth's mistook.

To this poor swain a keen Attorney came;—
"I give thee joy, good fellow! on thy name;
The rich old Dingley's dead;—no child has he,
Nor wife, nor will: his ALL is left for thee:
To be his fortune's heir thy claim is good·
Thou hast the name, and we will prove the blood."

The claim was made, 'twas tried,—it would not stand
They proved the blood, but were refused the land.

Assured of wealth, this man of simple heart,
To every friend had predisposed a part:
His wife had hopes indulged of various kind,
The three Miss Dingleys had their school assign'd,
Masters were sought for what they each required,
And books were bought and harpsichords were hired
So high was hope:—the failure touch'd his brain
And Robin never was himself again;
Yet he no wrath, no angry wish express'd,
But tried, in vain, to labour or to rest;
Then cast his bundle on his back and went
He knew not whither, nor for what intent.

Years fled;—of Robin all remembrance past
When home he wander'd in his rags at last:
A sailor's jacket on his limbs was thrown,
A sailor's story he had made his own:
Had suffer'd battles, prisons, tempests, storms,
Encountering death in all his ugliest forms:

His cheeks were haggard, hollow was his eye
Where madness lurk'd, conceal'd in misery;
Want, and th' ungentle world, had taught a part,
And prompted cunning to that simple heart:
"He now bethought him, he would roam no more
But live at home and labour as before."

Here clothed and fed, no sooner he began
To round and redden, than away he ran;
His wife was dead, their children past his aid,
So unmolested, from his home he stray'd:
Six years elapsed, when, worn with want and pain,
Came Robin wrapt in all his rags, again:—
We chide, we pity;—placed among our poor,
He fed again, and was a man once more.

As when a gaunt and hungry fox is found,
Entrapp'd alive in some rich hunter's ground:
Fed for the field, although each day s a feast,
Fatten you may, but never *tame* the beast;
A house protects him, savoury viands sustain:
But loose his neck and off he goes again:
So stole our Vagrant from his warm retreat,
To rove a prowler and be deem'd a cheat.

Hard was his fare; for him at length we saw,
In cart convey d and laid supine on straw
His feeble voice now spoke a sinking heart;
His groans now told the motions of the cart:
And when it stopp'd, he tried in vain to stand;
Closed was his eye, and clench'd his clammy hand.
Life ebb'd apace, and our best aid no more
Could his weak sense or dying heart restore:
But now he fell, a victim to the snare,
That vile attorneys for the weak prepare;—
They who when profit or resentment call,
Heed not the groaning victim they enthrall.

Then died lamented. in the strength of life,
A valued *Mother* and a faithful *Wife;*
Call'd not away, when time had loosed each hold
On the fond heart, and each desire grew cold;
But when, to all that knits us to our kind,
She felt fast-bound, as charity can bind:—
Not when the ills of age, its pain, its care,
The drooping spirit for its fate prepare:
And, each affection failing, leaves the heart
Loosed from life's charm, and willing to depart:
But all her ties the strong invader broke,
In all their strength, by one tremendous stroke!
Sudden and swift the eager pest came on.
And terror grew, till every hope was gone:

Still those around appear'd for hope to seek!
But view'd the sick and were afraid to speak.—
Slowly they bore, with solemn step, the dead;
When grief grew loud and bitter tears were shed,
My part began; a crowd drew near the place,
Awe in each eye, alarm in every face
So swift the ill, and of so fierce a kind,
That fear with pity mingled in each mind;
Friends with the husband came their griefs to blend
For good-man *Frankford* was to all a friend.
The last-born boy they held above the bier,
He knew not grief, but cries express'd his fear;
Each different age and sex reveal'd its pain,
In now a louder, now a lower strain;
While the meek father, listening to their tones,
Swell'd the full cadence of the grief by groans.
The elder sister strove her pangs to hide,
And soothing words to younger minds applied:
"Be still, be patient;" oft she strove to say;
But fail'd as oft, and weeping turn'd away.
Curious and sad, upon the fresh-dug hill,
The village lads stood melancholy still;
And idle children, wandering to and fro,
As Nature guided, took the tone of woe.
Arrived at home, how then they gazed around,
In every place,—where she—no more was found;—
The seat at table she was wont to fill;
The fire-side chair, still set, but vacant still:
The garden-walks, a labour all her own;
The latticed bower, with trailing shrubs o'ergrown,
The Sunday-pew she fill'd with all her race,—
Each place of hers, was now a sacred place,
That, while it call'd up sorrows in the eyes,
Pierced the full heart and forced them still to rise.
Oh sacred sorrow! by whom souls are tried,
Sent not to punish mortals, but to guide;
If thou art mine, (and who shall proudly dare
To tell his Maker, he has had his share?)
Still let me feel for what thy pangs are sent,
And be my guide and not my punishment!
Of *Leah Cousins* next the name appears,
With honours crown'd and blest with length of years
Save that she lived to feel, in life's decay,
The pleasure die, the honours drop away,
A matron she whom every village-wife
View'd as the help and guardian of her life;
Fathers and sons, indebted to her aid,
Respect to her and her profession paid,

Who in the house of plenty largely fed,
Yet took her station at the pauper's bed;
Nor from that duty could he bribed again,
While fear or danger urged her to remain:
In her experience all her friends relied,
Heaven was her help, and nature was her guide.
Thus Leah lived; long trusted, much caress'd,
Till a Town-Dame a youthful Farmer bless'd;
A gay vain bride, who would example give
To that poor village where she deign'd to live;
Some few months past, she sent, in hour of need,
For Doctor *Glibb*, who came with wond'rous speed:
Two days he waited, all his art applied,
To save the mother when her infant died:—
"'Twas well I came," at last he deign'd to say;
"'Twas wond'rous well;"—and proudly rode away.
The news ran round:—"How vast the Doctor's pow'r!
"He saved the Lady in the trying hour;
Saved her from death, when she was dead to hope,
And her fond husband had resign'd her up:
So all, like her, may evil fate defy,
If Doctor Glibb, with saving hand, be nigh."
Fame (now his friend), fear, novelty, and whim,
And fashion, sent the varying sex to him:
From this, contention in the village rose;
And *these* the Dame espoused; the Doctor *those!*
The wealthier part, to him and science went;
With luck and her the poor remain'd content.
The Matron sigh'd; for she was vex'd at heart,
With so much profit, so much fame, to part:
"So long successful in my art," she cried,
"And this proud man, so young and so untried!"
"Nay," said the Doctor, "dare you trust your wives,
The joy, the pride, the solace of your lives,
To one who acts and knows no reason why,
But trusts, poor hag! to luck for an ally?—
Who, on experience, can her claims advance,
And own the powers of accident and chance?
A whining dame, who prays in danger's view,
(A proof she knows not what beside to do;)
What's her experience? In the time that's gone,
Blundering she wrought and still she blunders on:—
And what is Nature? One who acts in aid
Of gossips half asleep, and half afraid:
With such allies I scorn my fame to blend,
Skill is my luck and courage is my friend,
No slave to Nature, 'tis my chief delight
To win my way and act in her despite:—

Trust then my art, that, in itself complete,
Needs no assistance and fears no defeat."
Warm'd by her well-spiced ale and riding pipe,
The angry matron grew for contest ripe.
"Can you," she said, "ungrateful and unjust,
Before experience, ostentation trust!
What is your hazard, foolish daughters, tell?
If safe, you're certain; if secure, you're well:
That I have luck must friend and foe confess,
And what's good judgment but a lucky guess?
He boasts, but what he *can* do:—will you run
From me, your friend? who, all *he* boasts, *have* done?
By proud and learned words his powers are known;
By healthy boys and handsome girls my own:
Wives! fathers! children! by my help you live;
Has this pale Doctor more than life to give?
No stunted cripple hops the village round:
Your hands are active and your heads are sound:
My lads are all your fields and flocks require;
My lasses all those sturdy lads admire.
Can this proud leech, with all his boasted skill,
Amend the soul or body, wit or will?
Does he for courts the sons of farmers frame,
Or make the daughter differ from the dame?
Or, whom he brings into this world of woe,
Prepares he them their part to undergo?
If not, this stranger from your doors repel,
And be content to *be* and to be *well*."
She spake, but ah! with words too strong and plain;
Her warmth offended, and her truth was vain:
The *many* left her, and the friendly *few*,
If never colder, yet they older grew.
Till, unemploy'd, she felt her spirits droop,
And took, insidious aid! th' inspiring cup:
Grew poor and peevish as her powers decay'd,
And propp'd the tottering frame with stronger aid,—
Then died! I saw our careful swains convey,
From this our changeful world, the Matron's clay,
Who to this world, at least, with equal care,
Brought them its changes, good and ill to share.
Now to his grave was *Roger Cuff* convey'd,
And strong resentment's lingering spirit laid.
Shipwreck'd in youth, he home return'd and found
His brethren three—and thrice they wish'd him drown'd.
"Is this a landsman's love? Be certain then
We part for ever!"—and they cried, "Amen!"
His words were truths:—Some forty summers fled,
His brethren died; his kin supposed him dead:

Three nephews these, one sprightly niece, and one,
Less near in blood—they call'd him *surly John;*
He work'd in woods apart from all his kind,
Fierce were his looks and moody was his mind.
For home the sailor now began to sigh:—
"The dogs are dead, and I'll return and die;
When all I have, my gains, in years of care,
The younger Cuffs with kinder souls shall share—
Yet hold! I'm rich;—with one consent they'll say,
You're welcome, Uncle, as the flowers in May."
No: I'll disguise me, be in tatters dress'd,
And best befriend the lads who treat me best."
Now all his kindred,—neither rich nor poor,—
Kept the wolf want some distance from the door.
In piteous plight he knock'd at George's gate,
And begg'd for aid, as he described his state:—
But stern was George;—"Let them who had thee strong
Help thee to drag thy weaken'd frame along;
To us a stranger, while your limbs would move,
From us depart, and try a stranger's love:
Ha! dost thou murmur?"—for, in Roger's throat,
Was "Rascal!" rising with disdainful note.
To pious James he then his prayer address'd;—
"Good-lack," quoth James, "thy sorrows pierce my breast
And, had I wealth, as have my brethren twain,
One board should feed us and one roof contain:
But plead I will thy cause and I will pray:
And so farewell! Heaven help thee on thy way!"
"Scoundrel!" said Roger (but apart),—and told
His case to Peter;—Peter too was cold;—
"The rates are high; we have a-many poor;
But I will think,"—he said, and shut the door.
Then the gay niece the seeming pauper press'd,—
"Turn, Nancy, turn, and view this form distress'd:
Akin to thine is this declining frame,
And this poor beggar claims an uncle's name."
"Avaunt! begone!" the courteous maiden said,
"Thou vile impostor! Uncle Roger's dead:
I hate thee, beast: thy look my spirit shocks;
Oh! that I saw thee starving in the stocks!"
"My gentle niece!" he said—and sought the wood.
"I hunger, fellow; prithee, give me food!"
"Give! am I rich? This hatchet take, and try
Thy proper strength, nor give those limbs the lie;
Work, feed thyself, to thine own powers appeal,
Nor whine out woes, thine own right-hand can heal;
And while that hand is thine and thine a leg,
Scorn of the proud or of the base to beg."

"Come, *surly John*, thy wealthy kinsman view,'
Old Roger said;—"thy words are brave and true;
Come, live with me: we'll vex those scoundrel-boys,
And that prim shrew shall, envying, hear our joys.—
Tobacco's glorious fume all day we'll share,
With beef and brandy kill all kinds of care;
We'll beer and biscuit on our table heap,
And rail at rascals, till we fall asleep."
Such was their life, but when the woodman died,
His grieving kin for Roger's smiles applied—
In vain; he shut, with stern rebuke, the door,
And dying, built a refuge for the poor:
With this restriction, That no *Cuff* should share
One meal, or shelter for one moment there.
My Record ends:—But hark! even now I hear
The bell of death, and know not whose to fear:
Our farmers all, and all our hinds were well;
In no man's cottage danger seem'd to dwell:—
Yet death of man proclaim these heavy chimes,
For thrice they sound, with pausing space, three times.
"Go; of my Sexton seek, Whose days are spent?—
What! he, himself!—and is old *Dibble* dead?"
His eightieth year he reach'd, still undecay'd,
And rectors five to one close vault convey'd:—
But he is gone; his care and skill I lose,
And gain a mournful subject for my Muse:
His masters lost, he'd oft in turn deplore,
And kindly add,—"Heaven grant, I lose no more!"
Yet, while he spake, a sly and pleasant glance
Appear'd at variance with his complaisance:
For, as he told their fate and varying worth,
He archly look'd,—"I yet may bear thee forth."
"When first"—(he so began)—"my trade I plied,
Good master *Addle* was the parish-guide;
His clerk and sexton, I beheld with fear,
His stride majestic, and his frown severe;
A noble pillar of the church he stood,
Adorn'd with college-gown and parish hood:
Then as he paced the hallow'd aisles about,
He fill'd the seven-fold surplice fairly out!
But in his pulpit wearied down with prayer,
He sat and seem'd as in his study's chair;
For while the anthem swell'd, and when it ceased,
Th' expecting people view'd their slumbering priest
Who, dozing, died.—Our Parson *Peele* was next;
'I will not spare you,' was his favourite text;
Nor did he spare, but raised them many a pound;
Even me he mulct for my poor rood of ground;

Yet cared he nought, but with a gibing speech,
'What should I do,' quoth he, 'but what I preach?
His piercing jokes (and he'd a plenteous store)
Were daily offer'd both to rich and poor:
His scorn, his love, in playful words he spoke;
His pity, praise, and promise, were a joke:
But though so young and blest with spirits high,
He died as grave as any judge could die:
The strong attack subdued his lively powers,—
His was the grave, and Doctor *Grandspear* ours.

"Then were there golden times the village round,
In his abundance all appear'd t' abound;
Liberal and rich, a plenteous board he spread,
E'en cool Dissenters at his table fed:
Who wish'd and hoped,—and thought a man so kind
A way to Heaven, though not their own, might find;
To them, to all, he was polite and free,
Kind to the poor, and, ah! most kind to me!
'*Ralph*,' would he say, '*Ralph Dibble*, thou art old;
That doublet fit, 'twill keep thee from the cold:
How does my sexton?—What! the times are hard;
Drive that stout pig, and pen him in thy yard.'
But most his reverence loved a mirthful jest:—
'Thy coat is thin: why, man, thou 'rt *barely* dress'd;
It's worn to th' thread: but I have nappy beer;
Clap that within, and see how they will wear!'

"Gay days were these: but they were quickly past:
When first he came, we found he couldn't last:
A whoreson cough (and at the fall of leaf)
Upset him quite;—but what's the gain of grief?

"Then came the *Author Rector:* his delight
Was all in books; to read them or to write:
Women and men he strove alike to shun,
And hurried homeward when his tasks were done:
Courteous enough, but careless what he said,
For points of learning he reserved his head;
And when addressing either poor or rich,
He knew no better than his cassock which:
He, like an osier, was of pliant kind,
Erect by nature, but to bend inclined;
Not like a creeper falling to the ground,
Or meanly catching on the neighbours round:—
Careless was he of surplice, hood, and band,—
And kindly took them as they came to hand;
Nor, like the doctor, wore a world of hat,
As if he sought for dignity in that:
He talk'd, he gave, but not with cautious rules:
Nor turn'd from gipsies, vagabonds, or fools;

It was his nature, but they thought it whim,
And so our beaux and beauties turn'd from him:
Of questions, much he wrote, profound and dark,—
How spake the serpent, and where stopp'd the ark;
From what far land the queen of Sheba came;
Who Salem's Priest, and what his father's name;
He made the Song of Songs its mysteries yield,
And Revelations to the world reveal'd.
He sleeps i' the aisle,—but not a stone records
His name or fame, his actions or his words:
And truth, your reverence, when I look around,
And mark the tombs in our sepulchral ground,
(Though dare I not of one man's hope to doubt),
I'd join the party who repose without.

"Next came a Youth from Cambridge, and, in truth
He was a sober and a comely youth;
He blush'd in meekness as a modest man,
And gain'd attention ere his task began:
When preaching, seldom ventured on reproof,
But touch'd his neighbours tenderly enough.
Him, in his youth, a clamorous sect assail'd,
Advised and censured, flatter'd,—and prevail'd.—
Then did he much his sober hearers vex,
Confound the simple, and the sad perplex;
To a new style his reverence rashly took;
Loud grew his voice, to threat'ning swell'd his look;
Above, below, on either side, he gazed,
Amazing all, and most himself amazed:
No more he read his preachments pure and plain,
But launch'd outright, and rose and sank again:
At times he smiled in scorn, at times he wept,
And such sad coil with words of vengeance kept,
That our best sleepers started as they slept.

"'Conviction comes like lightning,' he would cry;
'In vain you seek it, and in vain you fly;
'Tis like the rushing of the mighty wind,
Unseen its progress, but its power your find;
It strikes the child ere yet its reason wakes;
His reason fled, the ancient sire it shakes;
The proud, learn'd man, and him who loves to know
How and from whence these gusts of grace will blow,
It shuns,—but sinners in their way impedes.
And sots and harlots visits in their deeds:
Of faith and penance it supplies the place;
Assures the vilest that they live by grace,
And, without running, makes them win the race.'

"Such was the doctrine our young prophet taught;
And here converts, there confusion wrought;

When his thin cheek assumed a deadly hue
And all the rose to one small spot withdrew
They call'd it hectic; 'twas a fiery flush,
More fix'd and deeper than the maiden blush;
His paler lips the pearly teeth disclosed,
And lab'ring lungs the length'ning speech opposed
No more his span-girth shanks and quiv'ring thighs
Upheld a body of the smaller size;
But down he sank upon his dying bed,
And gloomy crotchets fill'd his wandering head.—
"'Spite of my faith, all-saving faith,' he cried,
'I fear of worldly works the wicked pride:
Poor as I am, degraded, abject, blind,
The good I've wrought still rankles in my mind;
My alms-deeds all, and every deed I've done,
My moral-rags defile me every one;
It should not be:—what say'st thou? tell me, Ralph.'
Quoth I, 'Your reverence, I believe, you're safe:
Your faith's your prop, nor have you pass'd such time
In life's good-works as swell them to a crime.
If I of pardon for my sins were sure,
About my goodness I would rest secure.'
"Such was his end; and mine approaches fast;
I've seen my best of preachers,—and my last."—
He bow'd, and archly smiled at what he said,
Civil but sly:—"And is old Dibble dead?"
Yes! he is gone: and WE are going all;
Like flowers we wither, and like leaves we fall;—
Here, with an infant, joyful sponsors come,
Then bear the new-made Christian to its home;
A few short years and we behold him stand,
To ask a blessing, with his bride in hand:
A few, still seeming shorter, and we hear
His widow weeping at her husband's bier:—
Thus, as the months succeed, shall infants take
Their names; thus parents shall the child forsake;
Thus brides again and bridegrooms blithe shall kneel
By love or law compell'd their vows to seal,
Ere I again, or one like me, explore
These simple Annals of the VILLAGE POOR.

THE BOROUGH.

LETTER I.

The Difficulty of describing Town Scenery—A Comparison with certain Views in the Country—The River and Quay—The Shipping and Business—Ship Building—Sea Boys and Port Views—Village and Town Scenery again compared—Walks from Town—Cottage and adjoining Heath, &c.—House of Sunday Entertainment—The Sea; a Summer and Winter View—A Shipwreck at Night, and its Effects on Shore—Evening Amusements in the Borough—An Apology for the imperfect View which can be given of these Subjects.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

"Describe the Borough"—though our idle tribe
May love description, can we so describe,
That you shall fairly streets and buildings trace,
And all that gives distinction to a place!
This cannot be; yet, moved by your request,
A part I paint—let Fancy form the rest.

Cities and towns, the various haunts of men,
Require the pencil; they defy the pen:
Could he, who sang so well the Grecian fleet,
So well have sung of alley, lane, or street?
Can measured lines these various buildings show,
The Town-Hall Turning, or the Prospect Row?
Can I the seats of wealth and want explore,
And lengthen out my lays from door to door?

Then let thy Fancy aid me—I repair
From this tall mansion of our last-year's Mayor
Till we the outskirts of the Borough reach,
And these half-buried buildings next the beach;
Where hang at open doors the net and cork,
While squalid sea-dames mend the meshy work;
Till comes the hour, when fishing through the tide,
The weary husband throws his freight aside;
A living mass, which now demands the wife,
Th' alternate labours of their humble life.

Can scenes like these withdraw thee from thy wood,
Thy upland forest or thy valley's flood?

Seek then thy garden's shrubby bound, and look,
As it steals by, upon the bordering brook;
That winding streamlet, limpid, lingering, slow,
Where the reeds whisper when the zephyrs blow:
Where in the midst, upon her throne of green,
Sits the large Lily as the water's queen;
And makes the current, forced awhile to stay,
Murmur and bubble as it shoots away;
Draw then the strongest contrast to that stream,
And our broad river will before thee seem.

With ceaseless motion comes and goes the tide
Flowing, it fills the channel vast and wide;
Then back to sea, with strong majestic sweep
It rolls, in ebb yet terrible and deep;
Here Samphire-banks and Salt-wort bound the flood,
There stakes and sea-weeds withering on the mud;
And higher up, a ridge of all things base,
Which some strong tide has roll'd upon the place.

Thy gentle river boasts its pigmy boat,
Urged on by pains, half grounded, half afloat;
While at her stern an angler takes his stand,
And marks the fish he purposes to land;
From that clear space, where in the cheerful ray
Of the warm sun, the scaly people play.

Far other craft our prouder river shows,
Hoys, pinks, and sloops; brigs, brigantines and snows;
Nor angler we on our wide stream descry,
But one poor dredger where his oysters lie:
He, cold and wet, and driving with the tide,
Beats his weak arms against his tarry ride,
Then drains the remnant of diluted gin,
To aid the warmth that languishes within;
Renewing oft his poor attempts to beat
His tingling fingers into gathering heat.

He shall again be seen when evening comes,
And social parties crowd their favourite rooms:
Where on the table pipes and paper lie,
The streaming bowl or foaming tankard by;
'T is then, with all these comforts spread around,
They hear the painful dredger's welcome sound
And few themselves the savoury boon deny,
The food that feeds the living luxury.

Yon is our Quay! those smaller hoys from town,
Its various ware, for country-use bring down;
Those laden waggons, in return, impart
The country-produce to the city mart;
Hark! to the clamour in that miry road,
Bounded and narrow'd by yon vessel's load;

The lumbering wealth she empties round the place,
Package, and parcel, hogshead, chest, and case.
While the loud seaman and the angry hind,
Mingling in business, bellow to the wind.
Near these a crew amphibious, in the docks,
Rear, for the sea, those castles on the stocks:
See! the long keel, which soon the waves must hide;
See! the strong ribs which form the roomy side;
Bolts yielding slowly to the sturdiest stroke,
And planks which curve and crackle in the smoke.
Around the whole rise cloudy wreaths, and far
Bear the warm pungeance of o'er-boiling tar.
Dabbling on shore half-naked sea-boys crowd,
Swim round a ship, or swing upon the shroud;
Or in a boat purloin'd, with paddles play,
And grow familiar with the watery way:
Young though they be, they feel whose sons they are,
They know what British seamen do and dare;
Proud of that fame, they raise and they enjoy
The rustic wonder of the village-boy.
Before you bid these busy scenes adieu,
Behold the wealth that lies in public view,
Those far extended heaps of coal and coke,
Where fresh-fill'd lime-kilns breathe their stifling smoke
This shall pass off, and you behold, instead,
The night-fire gleaming on its chalky bed;
When from the Light-house brighter beams will rise,
To show the shipman where the shallow lies.
Thy walks are ever pleasant; every scene
Is rich in beauty, lively, or serene——
Rich—is that varied view with woods around,
Seen from the seat, within the shrubb'ry bound;
Where shines the distant lake, and where appear
From ruins bolting, unmolested deer.
Lively—the village-green, the inn, the place
Where the good widow schools her infant-race.
Shops, whence are heard the hammer and the saw,
And village-pleasures unreproved by law:
Then how serene! when in your favourite room,
Gales from your jasmines soothe the evening gloom;
When from your upland paddock you look down,
And just perceive the smoke which hides the town;
When weary peasants at the close of day
Walk to their cots, and part upon the way;
When cattle slowly cross the shallow brook,
And shepherds pen their folds, and rest upon their crook.
We prune our hedges, prime our slender trees,
And nothing looks untutor'd and at ease,

On the wide heath, or in the flow'ry vale,
We scent the vapours of the sea-born gale,
Broad-beaten paths lead on from stile to stile,
And sewers from streets, the road-side banks defile;
Our guarded fields a sense of danger show,
Where garden-crops with corn and clover grow;
Fences are form'd of wreck and placed around
(With tenters tipp'd) a strong repulsive bound;
Wide and deep ditches by the gardens run,
And there in ambush lie the trap and gun:
Or yon broad board, which guards each tempting prize,
Like a tall bully, lifts its head and lies.

There stands a cottage with an open door,
Its garden undefended blooms before.
Her wheel is still, and overturn'd her stool,
While the lone Widow seeks the neighb'ring pool:
This gives us hope, all views of town to shun—
No! here are tokens of the Sailor-son;
That old blue jacket, and that shirt of check,
And silken kerchief for the seaman's neck:
Sea-spoils and shells from many a distant shore
And furry robe from frozen Labrador.

Our busy streets and sylvan walks between,
Fen, marshes, bog and heath all intervene:
Here pits of crag, with spongy, plashy base,
To some enrich th' uncultivated space:
For there are blossoms rare, and curious rush,
The gale's rich balm, and sun-dew's crimson blush,
Whose velvet leaf with radiant beauty dress'd,
Forms a gay pillow for the plover's breast.

Not distant far, a house commodious made,
(Lonely yet public stands) for Sunday-trade:
Thither, for this day free, gay parties go,
Their tea-house walk, their tippling rendezvous,
There humble couples sit in corner bowers
Or gaily ramble for th' allotted hours:
Sailor and lasses from the town attend,
The servant-lover, the apprentice-friend,
With all the idle social tribes who seek
And find their humble pleasures once a week.

Turn to the watery world!—but who to thee
(A wonder yet unview'd) shall paint—the Sea?
Various and vast, sublime in all its forms,
When lull'd by zephyrs, or when roused by storms
Its colours changing, when from clouds and sun
Shades after shades upon the surface run;
Embrown'd and horrid now, and now serene,
In limpid blue and evanescent green;

And oft the foggy banks on ocean lie,
Lift the fair sail, and cheat th' experienced eye.
Be it the Summer-noon: a sandy space
The ebbing tide has left upon its place;
Then just the hot and stony beach above,
Light twinkling streams in bright confusion move;
(For heated thus, the warmer air ascends,
And with the cooler in its fall contends)—
Then the broad bosom of the ocean keeps
An equal motion; swelling as it sleeps.
Then slowly sinking; curling to the strand,
Faint lazy waves o'ercreep the ridgy sand,
Or tap the tarry boat with gentle blow,
And back return in silence, smooth and slow.
Ships in the calm seem anchor'd; for they glide
On the still sea, urged slowly by the tide:
Art thou not present, this calm scene before,
Where all beside is pebbly length of shore,
And far as eye can reach, it can discern no more?
Yet sometimes comes a ruffling cloud to make
The quiet surface of the ocean shake;
As an awaken'd giant with a frown
Might show his wrath, and then to sleep sink down.
View now the Winter storm! above, one cloud,
Black and unbroken, all the skies o'ershroud;
Th' unwieldly porpoise through the day before
Had roll'd in view of boding men on shore:
And sometimes hid and sometimes show'd his form
Dark as the cloud, and furious as the storm.
All where the eye delights, yet dreads to roam,
The breaking billows cast the flying foam
Upon the billows rising—all the deep
Is restless change; the waves so swell'd and steep,
Breaking and sinking, and the sunken swells,
Nor one, one moment, in its station dwells:
But nearer land, you may the billows trace,
As if contending in their watery chase:
May watch the mightiest till the shoal they reach,
Then break and hurry to their utmost stretch:
Curl'd as they come, they strike with furious force,
And then re-flowing, take their grating course,
Raking the rounded flints, which ages past
Roll'd by their rage, and shall to ages last.
Far off the Petrel in the troubled way
Swims with her brood, or flutters in the spray;
She rises often, often drops again,
And sports at ease on the tempestuous main

High o'er the restless deep, above the reach
Of gunner's hope, vast flights of Wild-ducks stretch;
Far as the eye can glance on either side,
In a broad space and level line they glide;
All in their wedge-like figures from the north,
Day after day, flight after flight go forth.
In-shore their passage tribes of Sea-gulls urge,
And drop for prey within the sweeping surge;
Oft in the rough opposing blast they fly,
Far back, then turn, and all their force apply,
While to the storm they give their weak complaining
Or clap the sleek white pinion to the breast,
And in the restless ocean dip for rest.
Darkness begins to reign; the louder wind
Appals the weak and awes the firmer mind:
But frights not him, whom evening and the spray
In part conceal—yon Prowler on his way:
Lo! he has something seen; he runs apace,
As if he fear'd companion in the chase;
He sees his prize, and now he turns again,
Slowly and sorrowing—"Was your search in vain?"
Gruffly he answers, "'T is a sorry sight!
A seaman's body: there'll be more to night!"
Hark! to those sounds! they're from distress at sea
How quick they come! What terrors may there be!
Yes, 't is a driven vessel: I discern
Lights, signs of terror gleaming from the stern:
Others behold them too, and from the town
In various parties seamen hurry down;
Their wives pursue, and damsels urged by dread
Lest men so dear be into danger led;
Their head the gown has hooded, and their call
In this sad night is piercing like the squall;
They feel their kinds of power, and when they meet,
Chide, fondle, weep, dare, threaten, or intreat.
See one poor girl, all terror and alarm,
Has fondly seized upon her lover's arm;
"Thou shalt not venture;" and he answers "No!
I will not"—still she cries, "Thou shalt not go."
No need of this; not here the stoutest boat
Can through such breakers, o'er such billows float.
Yet may they view these lights upon the beach,
Which yield them hope, when help can never reach.
From parted clouds the moon her radiance throws
On the wild waves, and all the danger shows;
But shows them beaming in her shining vest,
Terrific splendour! gloom in glory dress'd!
This for a moment, and then clouds again
Hide every beam, and fear and darkness reign.

But hear we now those sounds? Do lights appear?
I see them not! the storm alone I hear:
And lo! the sailors homeward take their way;
Man must endure—let us submit and pray.
Such are our Winter-views: but night comes on—
Now business sleeps, and daily cares are gone:
Now parties form, and some their friends assist
To waste the idle hours at sober whist;
The tavern's pleasure or the concert's charm
Unnumber'd moments of their sting disarm;
Play-bills and open doors a crowd invite,
To pass off one dread portion of the night;
And show and song and luxury combined,
Lift off from man this burthen of mankind.
Others adventurous walk abroad and meet
Returning parties pacing through the street,
When various voices, in the dying day,
Hum in our walks, and greet us in our way;
When tavern-lights flit on from room to room,
And guide the tippling sailor staggering home;
There as we pass, the jingling bells betray,
How business rises with the closing day:
Now walking silent, by the river's side,
The ear perceives the rippling of the tide;
Or measured cadence of the lads who tow
Some enter'd hoy, to fix her in her row;
Or hollow sound, which from the parish-bell
To some departed spirit bids farewell!
Thus shall you something of our BOROUGH know
Far as a verse, with Fancy's aid, can show;
Of Sea or River, of a Quay or Street,
The best description must be incomplete;
But when a happier theme succeeds, and when
Men are our subjects and the deeds of men;
Then may we find the Muse in happier style,
And we may sometimes sigh and sometimes smile

LETTER II.

THE CHURCH.

Several Meanings of the Word *Church*—The building so called, here intended—Its Antiquity and Grandeur—Columns and Aisles—The Tower: the Stains made by Time compared with the mock Antiquity of the Artist—Progress of Vegetation on such Buildings—Bells—Tombs: one in decay—Mural Monuments, and the Nature of their Inscriptions—An Instance in a departed Burgess—Churchyard Graves—Mourners for the Dead—A Story of a betrothed Pair in humble Life, and Effects of Grief in the Survivor.

"What is a Church?"—Let Truth and Reason speak,
They would reply, "The faithful, pure, and meek;
From Christian folds, the one selected race,
Of all professions, and in every place."
"What is a Church?"—"A flock," our Vicar cries,
Whom bishops govern and whom priests advise;
Wherein are various states and due degrees,
The Bench for honour, and the Stall for ease:
That ease be mine, which, after all his cares,
The pious, peaceful prebendary shares."
"What is a Church?"—Our honest Sexton tells,
'T is a tall building, with a tower and bells;
Where priest and clerk with joint exertion strive
To keep the ardour of their flock alive;
That, by his periods eloquent and grave;
This, by responses, and a well-set stave:
These for the living; but when life be fled,
I toll myself the requiem for the dead."
'T is to this Church I call thee, and that place
Where slept our fathers when they'd run their race
We too shall rest, and then our children keep
Their road in life, and then, forgotten, sleep;
Meanwhile the building slowly falls away,
And like the builders, will in time decay.
The old Foundation—but it is not clear
When it was laid—you care not for the year;
On this, as parts decayed by time and storms,
Arose these various disproportion'd forms,
Yet Gothic all—the learn'd who visit us
(And our small wonders) have decided thus:—

"Yon noble Gothic arch," "That Gothic door;"
So have they said; of proof you'll need no more.
Here large plain columns rise in solemn style,
You'd love the gloom they make in either aisle;
When the sun's rays, enfeebled as they pass
(And shorn of splendour) through the storied glass,
Faintly display the figures on the floor,
Which pleased distinctly in their place before.
But ere you enter, you bold Tower survey,
Tall and entire, and venerably grey,
For time has soften'd what was harsh when new
And now the stains are all of sober hue:
The living stains which Nature's hand alone,
Profuse of life, pours forth upon the stone:
For ever growing; where the common eye
Can but the bare and rocky bed descry:
There Science loves to trace her tribes minute,
The juiceless foliage, and the tasteless fruit:
There she perceives them round the surface creep,
And while they meet their due distinction keep.
Mix'd but not blended; each its name retains,
And these are Nature's ever-during stains.
And wouldst thou, Artist! with thy tints and brush
Form shades like these? Pretender, where thy blush?
In three short hours shall thy presuming hand
Th' effect of three slow centuries command?
Thou may'st thy various greens and greys contrive,
They are not Lichens, nor like aught alive,
But yet proceed, and when thy tints are lost,
Fled in the shower, or crumbled by the frost;
When all thy work is done away as clean
As if thou never spread'st thy grey and green,
Then may'st thou see how Nature's work is done
How slowly true she lays her colours on;
When her least speck upon the hardest flint
Has mark and form and is a living tint;
And so embodied with the rock, that few
Can the small germ upon the substance view.
Seeds, to our eye invisible, will find
On the rude rock the bed that fits their kind;
There, in the rugged soil, they safely dwell,
Till showers and snows the subtle atoms swell,
And spread th' enduring foliage;—then we trace
The freckled flower upon the flinty base;
These all increase, till in unnoticed years
The stony tower as grey with age appears;
With coats of vegetation, thinly spread
Coat above coat, the living on the dead:

These then dissolve to dust, and make a way
For bolder foliage, nursed by their decay:
The long-enduring Ferns in time will all
Die and depose their dust upon the wall;
Where the wing'd seed may rest, till many a flower
Show Flora's triumph o'er the falling tower.
But ours yet stands, and has its Bells renown'd
For size magnificent and solemn sound;
Each has its motto: some contrived to tell,
In monkish rhyme, the uses of a bell;
Such wond'rous good, as few conceive could spring
From ten loud coppers when their clappers swing.
Enter'd the church—we to a tomb proceed,
Whose names and titles few attempt to read;
Old English letters, and those half pick'd out,
Leave us, unskilful readers, much in doubt;
Our sons shall see its more degraded state;
The tomb of grandeur hastens to its fate;
That marble arch, our sexton's favourite show
With all those ruff'd and painted pairs below;
The noble Lady and the Lord who rest
Supine, as courtly dame and warrior dress'd;
All are departed from their state sublime,
Mangled and wounded in their war with Time
Colleagued with mischief; here a leg is fled,
And lo! the Baron with but half a head;
Midway is cleft the arch; the very base
Is batter'd round and shifted from its place.
Wonder not, Mortal, at thy quick decay—
See! men of marble piecemeal melt away;
When whose the image we no longer read,
But monuments themselves memorials need.
With few such stately proofs of grief or pride
By wealth erected, is our Church supplied;
But we have mural tablets, every size,
That woe could wish, or vanity devise.
Death levels man,—the wicked and the just,
The wise, the weak, lie blended in the dust;
And by the honours dealt to every name,
The King of Terrors seems to level fame.
—See! here lamented wives, and every wife
The pride and comfort of her husband's life;
Here, to her spouse, with every virtue graced,
His mournful widow has a trophy placed;
And here 't is doubtful if the duteous son,
Or the good father, be in praise outdone.
This may be Nature: when our friends we lose,
Our alter'd feelings alter too our views:

What in their tempers teased us or distress'd,
Is, with our anger and the dead, at rest;
And much we grieve, no longer trial made,
For that impatience which we then display'd;
Now to their love and worth of every kind,
A soft compunction turns th' afflicted mind;
Virtues neglected then, adored become,
And graces slighted, blossom on the tomb.

'T is well; but let not love nor grief believe
That we assent (who neither loved nor grieve)
To all that praise which on the tomb is read,
To all that passion dictates for the dead;
But more indignant, we the tomb deride,
Whose bold inscription flattery sells to pride.

Read of this Burgess—on the stone appear
How worthy he! how virtuous! and how dear!
What wailing was there when his spirit fled,
How mourn'd his lady for her lord when dead,
And tears abundant through the town were shed;
See! he was liberal, kind, religious, wise,
And free from all disgrace and all disguise:
His sterling worth, which words cannot express,
Lives with his friends, their pride and their distress.

All this of Jacob Holmes? for his the name;
He thus kind, liberal, just, religious?—Shame!
What is the truth? Old Jacob married thrice;
He dealt in coals, and av'rice was his vice:
He ruled the Borough when his year came on,
And some forget, and some are glad he's gone;
For never yet with shilling could he part,
But when it left his hand, it struck his heart.

Yet, here will Love its last attentions pay,
And place memorials on these beds of clay.
Large level stones lie flat upon the grave,
And half a century's sun and tempest brave;
But many an honest tear and heart felt sigh
Have follow'd those who now unnoticed lie;
Of these what numbers rest on every side!
Without one token left by grief or pride;
Their graves soon levell'd to the earth, and then
Will other hillocks rise o'er other men;
Daily the dead on the decay'd are thrust,
And generations follow, "dust to dust."

Yes! there are real Mourners—I have seen
A fair, sad Girl, mild, suffering, and serene;
Attention (through the day) her duties claim'd,
And to be useful as resign'd she aim'd:
Neatly she dress'd, nor vainly seem'd t' expect
Pity for grief, or pardon for neglect;

But when her wearied parents sunk to sleep,
she sought her place to meditate and weep:
Then to her mind was all the past display'd
That faithful Memory brings to Sorrow's aid:
For then she thought on one regretted Youth
Her tender trust, and his unque-tion'd truth;
In ev'ry place she wander'd, where they d been,
And sadly sacred held the parting scene:
Where last for sea he took his leave—that place
With double interest would she nightly trace:
For long the courtship was, and he would say,
Each time he sail d,—"This once, and then the day:"
Yet prudence tarried, but when last he went,
He drew from pitying love a full consent.

Happy he sail'd, and great the care she took,
That he should softly sleep, and smartly look;
White was his better linen, and his cheek
Was made more trim than any on the deck;
And every comfort men at sea can know
Was hers to buy, to make, and to bestow:
For he to Greenland sail d, and much she told,
How he should guard against the climate's cold;
Yet saw not danger; dangers he d withstood,
Nor could she trace the fever in his blood:
His mess-mates smiled at flushings in his cheek,
And he too smiled, but seldom would he speak;
For now he found the danger, felt the pain,
With grievous symptoms he could not explain;
Hope was awaken d, as for home he sail'd,
But quickly sank, and never more prevail'd.

He call d his friend, and prefaced with a sigh
A lover's message—"Thomas I must die:
Would I could see my Sally, and could rest
My throbbing temples on her faithful breast,
And gazing go!—if not, this trifle take,
And say, till death I wore it for her sake;
Yes! I must die—blow on, sweet breeze, blow on!
Give me one look, before my life be gone,
Oh! give me that, and let me not despair,
One last fond look—and now repeat the prayer."

He had his wish, had more; I will not paint
The Lovers' meeting: she beheld him faint,—
With tender fears, she took a nearer view,
Her terrors doubling as her hopes withdrew;
He tried to smile, and, half succeeding, said,
"Yes! I must die;" and hope for ever fled.
Still long she nursed him: tender thoughts meantime
Were interchanged and hopes and views sublime.

To her he came to die,—and every day
She took some portion of the dread away;
With him she pray'd, to him his Bible read,
Soothed the faint heart, and held the aching head:
She came with smiles the hour of pain to cheer;
Apart she sigh'd; alone, she shed the tear:
Then, as if breaking from a cloud, she gave
Fresh light, and gilt the prospect of the grave.

One day he lighter seem'd, and they forgot
The care, the dread, the anguish of their lot:
They spoke with cheerfulness, and seem'd to think,
Yet said not so—"Perhaps he will not sink:"
A sudden brightness in his look appear'd,
A sudden vigour in his voice was heard:—
She had been reading in the Book of Prayer,
And led him forth, and placed him in his chair;
Lively he seem'd, and spoke of all he knew,
The friendly many, and the favourite few;
Nor one that day did he to mind recall,
But she has treasured, and she loves them all;
When in her way she meets them, they appear
Peculiar people—death has made them dear;
He named his Friend, but then his hand she press'd,
And fondly whisper'd, "Thou must go to rest;"
"I go," he said: but as he spoke, she found
His hand more cold, and fluttering was the sound!
Then gazed affrighten'd; but she caught a last,
A dying look of love,—and all was past!

She placed a decent stone his grave above,
Neatly engraved—an offering of her love;
For that she wrought, for that forsook her bed,
Awake alike to duty and the dead;
She would have grieved, had friends presumed to spare
The least assistance—'twas her proper care.

Here will she come, and on the grave will sit,
Folding her arms, in long abstracted fit;
But if observer pass, will take her round,
And careless seem, for she would not be found;
Then go again, and thus her hour employ,
While visions please her, and while woes destroy.

Forbear, sweet Maid! nor be by fancy led,
To hold mysterious converse with the dead;
For sure at length thy thoughts, thy spirits pain,
In this sad conflict will disturb thy brain;
All have their tasks and trials; thine are hard,
But short the time, and glorious the reward;
Thy patient spirit to thy duties give,
Regard the dead, but to the living live.

LETTER III.

THE VICAR—THE CURATE, ETC.

VICAR.

The lately departed Minister of the Borough—His soothing and supplicatory Manners—His cool and timid Affections—No Praise due to such negative virtue—Address to Characters of this Kind—the Vicar's Employments—His Talents and moderate Ambition—His Dislike of Innovation—His mild but ineffectual Benevolence—A Summary of his Character.

CURATE.

Mode of paying the Borough-Minister—The Curate has no such Resources—His Learning and Poverty.—Erroneous Idea of his Parent—His feelings as a Husband and Father—The dutiful Regard of his numerous Family—His Pleasure as a Writer, how interrupted—No Resource in the Press—Vulgar Insult—His Account of a Literary Society, and a Fund for the Relief of indigent Authors, &c.

WHERE ends our chancel in a vaulted space,
Sleep the departed Vicars of the place;
Of most, all mention, memory, thought are past—
But take a slight memorial of the last.
To what famed college we our Vicar owe,
To what fair country, let historians show:
Few now remember when the mild young man,
Ruddy and fair, his Sunday-task began;
Few live to speak of that soft soothing look
He cast around, as he prepared his book;
It was a kind of supplicating smile,
But nothing hopeless of applause the while;
And when he finish'd, his corrected pride
Felt the desert, and yet the praise denied.
Thus he his race began, and to the end
His constant care was, no man to offend;
No haughty virtues stirr'd his peaceful mind;
Nor urged the Priest to leave the flock behind:
He was his Master's Soldier, but not one
To lead an army of his Martyrs on:
Fear was his ruling passion; yet was Love,
Of timid kind, once known his heart to move
It led his patient spirit where it paid
Its languid offerings to a listening Maid:

She, with her widow'd Mother, heard him speak,
And sought awhile to find what he would seek:
Smiling he came, he smiled when he withdrew,
And paid the same attention to the two;
Meeting and parting without joy or pain,
He seem'd to come that he might go again.
The wondering girl, no prude, but something nice,
At length was chill'd by his unmelting ice;
She found her tortoise held such sluggish pace,
That she must turn and meet him in the chase:
This not approving, she withdrew till one
Came who appear'd with livelier hope to run;
Who sought a readier way the heart to move,
Than by faint dalliance of unthinking love.

Accuse me not that I approving paint
Impatient Hope or Love without restraint;
Or think the Passions, a tumultuous throng,
Strong as they are, ungovernably strong:
But is the laurel to the soldier due,
Who cautious comes not into danger's view?
What worth has Virtue by Desire untried,
When Nature's self enlists on duty's side?
The married dame in vain assail'd the truth
And guarded bosom of the Hebrew youth;
But with the daughter of the Priest of On
The love was lawful, and the guard was gone;
But Joseph's fame had lessen'd in our view,
Had he, refusing, fled the maiden too.

Yet our good priest to Joseph's praise aspired,
At once rejecting what his heart desired;
"I am escaped," he said, when none pursued;
When none attack'd him, "I am unsubdued:"

Oh pleasing pangs of love!" he sang again,
Cold to the joy, and stranger to the pain.
Ev'n in his age would he address the young,
'I too have felt these fires, and they are strong;'
But from the time he left his favourite maid,
To ancient females his devoirs were paid:
And still they miss him after Morning-prayer;
Nor yet successor fills the Vicar's chair,
Where kindred spirits in his praise agree,
A happy few, as mild and cool as he;
The easy followers in the female train,
Led without love, and captives without chain.

Ye Lilies male! think (as your tea you sip,
While the town small-talk flows from lip to lip;
Intrigues half-gather'd, conversation-scraps,
Kitchen-cabals, and nursery-mishaps,)

If the vast world may not some scene produce,
Some state where your small talents might have use
Within seraglios you might harmless move,
'Mid ranks of beauty, and in haunts of love;
There from too daring man the treasures guard,
An easy duty, and its own reward;
Nature's soft substitutes, you there might save
From crime the tyrant, and from wrong the slave.
  But let applause be dealt in all we may,
Our Priest was cheerful, and in season gay;
His frequent visits seldom fail'd to please;
Easy himself, he sought his neighbour's ease,
To a small garden with delight he came,
And gave successive flowers a summer's fame;
These he presented with a grace his own
To his fair friends, and made their beauties known,
Not without moral compliment; how they
"Like flowers were sweet, and must like flowers decay."
  Simple he was, and loved the simple truth,
Yet had some useful cunning from his youth;
A cunning never to dishonour lent,
And rather for defence than conquest meant;
'T was fear of power, with some desire to rise,
But not enough to make him enemies;
He ever aim'd to please; and to offend
Was ever cautious; for he sought a friend;
Yet for the friendship never much would pay,
Content to bow, be silent, and obey.
And by a soothing suff'rance find his way.
  Fiddling and fishing were his arts: at times
He alter'd sermons, and he aim'd at rhymes;
And his fair friends, not yet intent on cards,
Oft he amused with riddles and charades.
  Mild were his doctrines, and not one discourse
But gain'd in softness what it lost in force:
Kind his opinions; he would not receive
An ill report, nor evil act believe;
"If true, 't was wrong; but blemish great or small
Have all mankind; yea, sinners are we all."
  If ever fretful thought disturb'd his breast,
If aught of gloom that cheerful mind oppress'd,
It sprang from innovation: it was then
He spake of mischief made by restless men;
Not by new doctrines: never in his life
Would he attend to controversial strife;
For Sects he cared not; "They are not of us,
Nor need we, brethren, their concerns discuss;

But 'tis the change, the schism at home I feel;
Ills few perceive, and none have skill to heal;
Not at the altar our young brethren read
(Facing their flock) the decalogue and creed;
But at their duty, in their desks they stand,
With naked surplice, lacking hood and band:
Churches are now of holy song bereft,
And half our ancient customs changed or left;
Few sprigs of ivy are at Christmas seen,
Nor crimson berry tips the holly's green;
Mistaken choirs refuse the solemn strain
Of ancient Sternhold, which from ours amain
Comes flying forth from aisle to aisle about,
Sweet links of harmony and long drawn out."

These were to him essentials; all things new
He deem'd superfluous, useless, or untrue;
To all beside indifferent, easy, cold,
Here the fire kindled, and the woe was told.

Habit with him was all the test of truth,
"It must be right: I've done it from my youth."
Questions he answer'd in as brief a way,
"It must be wrong—it was of yesterday."

Though mild benevolence our Priest possess'd,
'T was but by wishes or by words express'd,
Circles in water, as they wider flow,
The less conspicuous in their progress grow,
And when at last they touch upon the shore,
Distinction ceases, and they're view'd no more.
His love, like that last circle, all embraced,
But with effect that never could be traced.

Now rests our Vicar. They who knew him best
Proclaim his life t' have been entirely rest;
Free from all evils which disturb his mind,
Whom studies vex and controversies blind.

The rich approved,—of them in awe he stood,
The poor admired,—they all believed him good;
The old and serious of his habits spoke:
The frank and youthful loved his pleasant joke;
Mothers approved a safe contented guest,
And daughters one who back'd each small request
In him his flock found nothing to condemn;
Him sectaries liked,—he never troubled them;
No trifles fail'd his yielding mind to please,
And all his passions sunk in early ease;
Nor one so old has left this world of sin,
More like the being that he enter'd in.

THE CURATE.

Ask you what lands our Pastor tithes?—Alas!
But few our acres, and but short our grass:
In some fat pastures of the rich, indeed,
May roll the single cow or favourite steed;
Who, stable-fed, is here for pleasure seen,
His sleek sides bathing in the dewy green;
But these, our hilly heath and common wide
Yield a slight portion for the parish-guide;
No crops luxuriant in our borders stand,
For here we plough the ocean, not the land;
Still reason wills that we our Pastor pay,
And custom does it on a certain day:
Much is the duty, small the legal due,
And this with grateful minds we keep in view;
Each makes his off'ring, some by habit led,
Some by the thought, that all men must be fed
Duty and love, and piety and pride,
Have each their force, and for the Priest provide
Not thus our Curate, one whom all believe
Pious and just, and for whose fate they grieve;
All see him poor, but ev'n the vulgar know
He merits love, and their respect bestow,
A man so learn'd you shall but seldom see,
Nor one so honour'd, so aggrieved as he;—
Not grieved by years alone; though his appear
Dark and more dark; severer on severe:
Not in his need,—and yet we all must grant
How painful 'tis for feeling Age to want:
Nor in his body's sufferings: yet we know
Where Time as plough'd, there misery loves to sow,
But in the wearied mind, that all in vain
Wars with distress, and struggles with its pain.
His Father saw his powers—"I'll give," quoth he,
"My first-born learning; 'twill a portion be:"
Unhappy gift! a portion for a son!
But all he had:—he learn'd, and was undone!
Better, apprenticed to an humble trade,
Had he the cassock for the priesthood made,
Or thrown the shuttle, or the saddle shaped,
And all these pangs of feeling souls escaped.
He once had hope—Hope, ardent, lively, light;
His feelings pleasant, and his prospects bright:
Eager of fame, he read, he thought, he wrote,
Weigh'd the Greek page, and added note on note;

At morn, at evening at his work was he,
And dream'd what his Euripides would be.
Then care began:—he loved, he woo'd, he wed
Hope cheer'd him still, and Hymen bless'd his bed—
A curate's bed! then came the woeful years;
The husband's terrors, and the father's tears;
A wife grown feeble, mourning, pining, vex'd
With wants and woes—by daily cares perplex'd;
No more a help, a smiling, soothing aid,
But boding, drooping, sickly, and afraid.
A kind physician, and without a fee,
Gave his opinion—"Send her to the sea."
"Alas!" the good man answer'd, "can I send
A friendless woman? Can I find a friend?
No; I must with her, in her need, repair
To that new place; the poor lie every where;—
Some priest will pay me for my pious pains:"
He said, he came, and here he yet remains.
Behold his dwelling! this poor hut he hires,
Where he from view, though not from want, retires;
Where four fair daughters, and five sorrowing sons,
Partake his sufferings, and dismiss his duns;
All join their efforts, and in patience learn
To want the comforts they aspire to earn;
For the sick mother something they'd obtain,
To soothe her grief and mitigate her pain:
For the sad father something they'd procure,
To ease the burden they themselves endure.
Virtues like these at once delight and press
On the fond father with a proud distress;
On all around he looks with care and love,
Grieved to behold, but happy to approve.
Then from his care, his love, his grief he steals,
And by himself an Author's pleasure feels:
Each line detains him; he omits not one,
And all the sorrows of his state are gone.—
Alas! even then, in that delicious hour,
He feels his fortune, and laments its power.
Some Tradesman's bill his wandering eyes engage,
Some scrawl for payment thrust 'twixt page and page,
Some bold, loud rapping at his humble door,
Some surly message he has heard before,
Awake, alarm, and tell him he is poor.
An angry Dealer, vulgar, rich, and proud,
Thinks of his bill, and, passing, raps aloud;
The elder daughter meekly makes him way—
"I want my money, and I cannot stay:

My mill is stopp'd; what, Miss! I cannot grind
Go tell your father he must raise the wind:"
Still trembling, troubled, the dejected maid
Says, "Sir! my father!—" and then stops afraid
Ev'n his hard heart is soften'd, and he hears
Her voice with pity; he respects her tears;
His stubborn features half admit a smile,
And his tone softens—"Well! I'll wait awhile."
Pity! a man so good, so mild, so meek,
At such an age, should have his bread to seek;
And all those rude and fierce attacks to dread,
That are more harrowing than the want of bread
Ah! who shall whisper to that misery peace!
And say that want and insolence shall cease?
"But why not publish?"—those who know too well,
Dealers in Greek, are fearful 'twill not sell;
Then he himself is timid, troubled, slow,
Nor likes his labours nor his griefs to show;
The hope of fame may in his heart have place,
But he has dread and horror of disgrace;
Nor has he that confiding, easy way,
That might his learning and himself display,
But to his work he from the world retreats,
And frets and glories o'er the favourite sheets.
But see! the Man himself; and sure I trace
Signs of new joy exulting in that face
O'er care that sleeps—we err, or we discern
Life in thy looks—the reason we may learn?
"Yes," he replied, "I am happy, I confess,
To learn that some are pleased with happiness
Which others feel—there are who now combine
The worthiest natures in the best design,
To aid the letter'd poor, and soothe such ills as mine
We now more keenly feel the world's contempt,
And from its miseries are the least exempt;
Now Hope shall whisper to the wounded breast,
And Grief, in soothing expectation, rest.
"Yes, I am taught that men who think, who feel,
Unite the pains of thoughtful men to heal;
Not with disdainful pride, whose bounties make
The needy curse the benefits they take;
Not with the idle vanity that knows
Only a selfish joy when it bestows;
Not with o'erbearing wealth, that, in disdain,
Hurls the superfluous bliss at groaning pain:
But these are men who yield such blest relief,
That with the grievance they destroy the grief;

Their timely aid the needy sufferers find,
Their generous manner soothes the suffering mind;
There is a gracious bounty, form'd to raise
Him whom it aids; their charity is praise;
A common bounty may relieve distress,
But whom the vulgar succour they oppress;
This though a favour is an honour too,
Though Mercy's duty, yet 't is Merit's due;
When our relief from such resources rise,
All painful sense of obligation dies;
And grateful feelings in the bosom wake,
For 't is their offerings, not their alms, we take.

Long may these founts of Charity remain,
And never shrink, but to be fill'd again:
True! to the Author they are now confin'd,
To him who gave the treasure of his mind,
His time, his health,—and thankless found mankind:
But there is hope that from these founts may flow
A side-way stream, and equal good bestow;
Good that may reach us, whom the day's distress
Keeps from the fame and perils of the Press;
Whom study beckons from the Ills of Life,
And they from Study; melancholy strife!
Who then can say, but bounty now so free,
And so diffused, may find its way to me?

Yes! I may see my decent table yet
Cheer'd with the meal that adds not to my debt;
May talk of those to whom so much we owe,
And guess their names whom yet we may not know;
Blest, we shall say, are those who thus can give,
And next who thus upon the bounty live:
Then shall I close with thanks my humble meal,
And feel so well—Oh, God! how shall I feel!"

LETTER IV.

SECTS AND PROFESSIONS IN RELIGION.

Sects and Professions in Religion are numerous and successive —General Effect of false Zeal—Deists—Fanatical Idea of Church Reformers—The Church of Rome—Baptists—Swedenborgians—Universalists—Jews.

Methodists of two Kinds; Calvinistic and Arminian.

The Preaching of a Calvinistic Enthusiast—His Contempt of Learning—Dislike to sound Morality: why—His Idea of Conversion—His Success and Pretensions to Humility.

The Arminian Teacher of the older Flock—Their Notions of the Operations and Power of Satan—Description of his Devices—Their opinion of regular Ministers—Comparison of these with the Preacher himself—A Rebuke to his Hearers: introduces a Description of the powerful Effects of the Word in the early and awakening Days of Methodism.

"SECTS in Religion?"—Yes, of every race
We nurse some portion in our favour'd place;
Not one warm preacher of one growing sect
Can say our Borough treats him with neglect;
Frequent as fashions, they with us appear,
And you might ask, "how think we for the year?"
They come to us as riders in a trade,
And with much art exhibit and persuade.
Minds are for Sects of various kinds decreed,
As diff'rent soils are form'd for diff'rent seed;
Some when converted sigh in sore amaze,
And some are wrapt in joy's ecstatic blaze;
Others again will change to each extreme,
They know not why—as hurried in a dream;
Unstable they, like water, take all forms,
Are quick and stagnant; have their calms and storms
High on the hills, they in the sunbeams glow,
Then muddily they move debased and slow;
Or cold and frozen rest, and neither rise nor flow.
Yet none the cool and prudent Teacher prize,
On him they dote who wakes their ecstasies;
With passions ready primed such guide they meet,
And warm and kindle with th imparted heat;
'T is he who wakes the nameless strong desire,
The melting rapture and the glowing fire;
'T is he who pierces deep the tortured breast,
And stirs the terrors never more to rest.
Opposed to these we have a prouder kind,
Rash without heat, and without raptures blind;

These our *Glad Tidings* unconcern'd peruse,
Search without awe, and without fear refuse;
The Truths, the blessings found in Sacred Writ,
Call forth their spleen, and exercise their wit;
Respect from these nor saints nor martyrs gain,
The zeal they scorn, and they deride the pain;
And take their transient, cool contemptuous view,
Of that which must be tried, and doubtless *may* be *true*.
Friends of our Faith we have, whom doubts like these
And keen remarks, and bold objections please:
They grant such doubts have weaker minds oppress'd,
Till sound conviction gave the troubled rest.
"But still," they cry, "let none their censures spare,
They but confirm the glorious hopes we share:
From doubt, disdain, derision, scorn, and lies,
With five-fold triumph sacred Truth shall rise."
Yes! I allow, so Truth shall stand at last,
And gain fresh glory to the conflict past:—
As Solway-Moss (a barren mass and cold,
Death to the seed, and poison to the fold),
The smiling plain and fertile vail o erlaid,
Choked the green sod, and kill d the springing blade,
That, changed by culture, may in time be seen,
Enrich'd by golden grain, and pasture green;
And these fair acres rented and enjoy'd
May these excel by Solway-Moss destroy'd.
Still must have mourn d the tenant of the day,
For hopes destroy'd, and harvests swept away;
To him the gain of future years unknown,
The instant grief and suffering were his own:
So must I grieve for many a wounded heart,
Chill'd by those doubts which bolder minds impart:
Truth in the end shall shine divinely clear,
But sad the darkness till those times appear;
Contests for truth, as wars for freedom, yield
Glory and joy to those who gain the field:
But still the Christian must in pity sigh
For all who suffer, and uncertain die.
Here are, who all the Church maintains approve,
But yet the Church herself they will not love;
In angry speech, they blame the carnal tie,
Which pure Religion lost her spirit by:
What time from prisons, flames, and tortures led,
She slumber'd careless in a royal bed;
To make, they add, the Church's glory shine,
Should Diocletian reign, not Constantine.
"In pomp," they cry, "is England's Church arrayed,
Her cool Reformers wrought like men afraid,

We would have pull'd her gorgeous temples down,
And spurn'd her mitre, and defiled her gown;
We would have trodden low both bench and stall,
Nor left a tythe remaining, great or small."
Let us be serious—Should such trials come,
Are they themselves prepared for martyrdom?
It seems to us that our reformers knew
Th' important work they undertook to do;
An equal priesthood they were loth to try,
Lest zeal and care should with ambition die,
To them it seem'd that, take the tenth away,
Yet priests must eat, and you must feed or pay:
Would they indeed, who hold such pay in scorn,
Put on the muzzle when they tread the corn?
Would they all, gratis, watch and tend the fold,
Nor take one fleece to keep them from the cold?
Men are not equal, and it is meet and right
That robes and titles our respect excite;
Order require it; 'tis by vulgar pride
That such regard is censured and denied;
Or by that false enthusiastic zeal,
That thinks the Spirit will the priest reveal,
And show to all men, by their powerful speech,
Who are appointed and inspired to teach:
Alas! could we the dangerous rule believe,
Whom for their teacher should the crowd receive?
Since all the varying kinds demand respect,
All press you on to join their chosen sect,
Although but in this single point agreed,
"Desert your churches and adopt our creed."
We know full well how much our forms offend
The burden'd Papist and the simple Friend:
Him, who new robes for every service takes,
And who in drab and beaver sighs and shakes;
He on the priest, whom hood and band adorn,
Looks with a sleepy eye of silent scorn:
But him I would not for my friend and guide,
Who views such things with spleen, or wears with pride.
See next our several Sects,—but first behold
The Church of Rome, who here is poor and old:
Use not triumphant rail'ry, or, at least,
Let not thy mother be a whore and beast;
Great was her pride indeed in ancient times,
Yet shall we think of nothing but her crimes?
Exalted high above all earthly things,
She placed her foot upon the neck of kings;
But some have deeply since avenged the crown,
And thrown her glory and her honours down;

Nor neck nor ear can she of kings command,
Nor place a foot upon her own fair land.
Among her sons, with us a quiet few,
Obscure themselves, her ancient state review,
And fond and melancholy glances cast
On power insulted, and on triumph past:
They look, they can but look, with many a sigh,
On sacred buildings doom'd in dust to lie:
"On seats," they tell, "where priests mid tapers dim
Breathed the warm prayer, or tuned the midnight hymn.
Where trembling penitents their guilt confess'd,
Where want had succour, and contrition rest;
There weary men from trouble found relief,
There men in sorrow found repose from grief:
To scenes like these the fainting soul retired;
Revenge and anger in these cells expired,
By pity soothed, remorse lost half her fears,
And soften'd pride dropp'd penitential tears.
"Then convent walls and nunnery spires arose,
In pleasant spots which monk or abbot chose;
When counts and barons saints devoted fed,
And making cheap exchange had pray'r for bread.
"Now all is lost, the earth where abbeys stood
Is layman's land, the glebe, the stream, the wood;
His oxen low where monks retired to eat,
His cows repose upon the prior's seat:
And wanton doves within the cloisters bill,
Where the chaste votary warr'd with wanton will."
Such is the change they mourn, but they restrain
The rage of grief, and passively complain.
We've Baptists old and new; forbear to ask
What the distinction—I decline the task:
This I perceive, that when a sect grows old,
Converts are few, and the converted cold:
First comes the hot-bed heat, and while it glows
The plants spring up, and each with vigour grows;
Then comes the cooler day, and though awhile
The verdure prospers and the blossoms smile,
Yet poor the fruit, and form'd by long delay,
Nor will the profits for the culture pay:
The skilful gard'ner then no longer stops,
But turns to other beds for bearing crops.
Some Swedenborgians in our streets are found,
Those wandering walkers on enchanted ground,
Who in our world can other worlds survey,
And speak with spirits though confined in clay:
Of Bible-mysteries they the keys possess,
Assured themselves, where wiser men but guess:

'Tis theirs to see around, about, above,—
How spirits mingle thoughts, and angels move;
Those whom our grosser views from us exclude
To them appear—a heavenly multitude;
While the dark sayings, seal'd to men like us,
Their priests interpret, and their flocks discuss
But while these gifted men, a favour'd fold,
New powers exhibit and new worlds behold;
Is there not danger lest their minds confound
The pure above them with the gross around?
May not these Phaëtons, who thus contrive
'Twixt heaven above and earth beneath to drive,
When from their flaming chariots they descend,
The worlds they visit in their fancies blend?
Alas! too sure on both they bring disgrace,
Their earth is crazy, and their heaven is base.
We have, it seems, who treat, and doubtless well
Of a chastising not awarding Hell:
Who are assured that an unoffended God
Will cease to use the thunder and the rod;
A soul on earth, by crime and folly stain'd,
When here corrected has improvement gain'd;
In other state still more improved to grow,
And nobler powers in happier world to know;
New strength to use in each divine employ,
And more enjoying, looking to more joy.
A pleasing vision! could we thus be sure
Polluted souls would be at length so pure;
The view is happy, we may think it just,
It may be true—but who shall add, it must?
To the plain words and sense of Sacred Writ,
With all my heart I reverently submit;
But where it leaves me doubtful, I'm afraid
To call conjecture to my reason's aid;
Thy thoughts, thy ways, great God! are not as mine
And to thy mercy I my soul resign.
Jews are with us, but far unlike to those,
Who, led by David, warr'd with Israel's foes;
Unlike to those whom his imperial son
Taught truths divine—the Preacher Solomon
Nor war nor wisdom yield our Jews delight;
They will not study, and they dare not fight.
These are, with us, a slavish, knavish crew,
Shame and dishonour to the name of Jew;
The poorest masters of the meanest arts,
With cunning heads, and cold and cautious hearts,
They grope their dirty way to petty gains,
While poorly paid for their nefarious pains.

Amazing race! deprived of land and laws,
A general language, and a public cause;
With a religion none can now obey,
With a reproach that none can take away.
A people still, whose common ties are gone;
Who, mix'd with every race, are lost in none.
What said their Prophet?—"Should'st thou disobey
The Lord shall take thee from thy land away;
Thou shalt a by-word and a proverb be,
And all shall wonder at thy woe and thee;
Daughter and son, shalt thou, while captive, have,
And see them made the bond-maid and the slave;
He, whom thou leav'st, the Lord thy God shall bring
War to thy country on an eagle-wing.
A people strong and dreadful to behold,
Stern to the young, remorseless to the old;
Masters whose speech thou canst not understand,
By cruel signs shall give the harsh command:
Doubtful of life, shalt thou by night, by day,
For grief, and dread, and trouble pine away;
Thy evening wish,—Would God I saw the sun!
Thy morning sigh,—Would God the day were done!
Thus shalt thou suffer, and to distant times
Regret thy misery, and lament thy crimes."
A part there are, whom doubtless man might trust,
Worthy as wealthy, pure, religious, just;
They who with patience, yet with rupture look
On the strong promise of the Sacred Book:
As unfulfill'd th' endearing words they view,
And blind to truth, yet own their prophets true
Well pleased they look for Sion's coming state
Nor think of Julian's boast and Julian's fate.
More might I add; I might describe the flocks
Made by Seceders from the ancient stocks;
Those who will not to any guide submit,
Nor find one creed to their conceptions fit—
Each sect, they judge, in something goes astray,
And every church has lost the certain way;
Then for themselves they carve out creed and laws,
And weigh their atoms, and divide their straws.
A Sect remains, which, though divided long
In hostile parties, both are fierce and strong,
And into each enlist a warm and zealous throng.
Soon as they rose in fame, the strife arose.
The Calvinistic these, th' Arminian those;
With Wesley some remain'd the remnant Whitfield chose
Now various leaders both the parties take,
And the divided hosts their new divisions make.

See yonder Preacher! to his people pass,
Borne up and swell'd by tabernacle-gas:
Much he discourses, and of various points,
All unconnected, void of limbs and joints:
He rails, persuades, explains, and moves the will
By fierce bold words, and strong mechanic skill.
"That Gospel, Paul with zeal and love maintain'd
To others lost, to you is now explain'd:
No worldly learning can these points discuss,
Books teach them not as they are taught to us.
Illiterate call us!—let their wisest man
Draw forth his thousands as your Teacher can:
They give their moral precepts: so, they say,
Did Epictetus once, and Seneca:
One was a slave, and slaves we all must be,
Until the Spirit comes and sets us free.
Yet hear you nothing from such men but works;
They make the Christian's service like the Turks.
"Hark to the Churchman, day by day he cries
'Children of Men, be virtuous and be wise:
'Seek patience, justice, temperance, meekness, truth:
'In age be courteous, be sedate in youth'.—
So they advise, and when such things be read,
How can we wonder that their flocks are dead?
"The Heathens wrote of Virtue; they could dwell
On such light points; in them it might be well;
They might for virtue strive; but I maintain,
Our strife for virtue would be proud and vain.
When Samson carried Gaza's gates so far,
Lack'd he a helping hand to bear the bar?
Thus the most virtuous must in bondage groan:
Samson is grace, and carries all alone."
"Hear you not priests their feeble spirits spend,
In bidding Sinners turn to God, and mend;
To check their passions and to walk aright,
To run the Race, and fight the glorious Fight?
Nay more—to pray, to study, to improve,
To grow in goodness, to advance in love?
"Oh! Babes and Sucklings, dull of heart and slow
Can Grace be gradual? Can Conversion grow?
The work is done by instantaneous call;
Converts at once are made, or not at all:
Nothing is left to grow, reform, amend,
The first emotion is the Movement's end
If once forgiven, Debt can be no more,
If once adopted, will the heir be poor?
The man who gains the twenty thousand prize,
Does he by little and by little rise?

There can no fortune for the Soul be made,
By peddling cares and saving's in her trade."

"Why are our sins forgiven?—Priests reply
—'Because by faith on mercy we rely;
Because, believing, we repent and pray.'—
Is this their doctrine?—then they go astray:
We're pardon'd neither for belief nor deed,
For faith nor practice, principle nor creed;
Nor for our sorrow for our former sin,
Nor for our fears when better thoughts begin;
Nor prayers nor penitence in the cause avail,
All strong remorse, all soft contrition fail;—
It is the *Call!* till that proclaims us free,
In darkness, doubt, and bondage we must be;
Till that *assures* us, we've in vain endured,
And all is over when we're once assured."

"This is Conversion:—First there comes a cry
Which utters, 'Sinner, thou'rt condemn'd to die:'
Then the struck soul to every aid repairs,
To church and altar, ministers and prayers:
In vain she strives,—involv'd, engulf'd in sin,
She looks for hell, and seems already in:
When in this travail the New Birth comes on,
And in an instant every pang is gone:
The mighty work is done without our pains,—
Claim but a part, and not a part remains."

"All this experience tells the Soul, and yet
These moral men their reason and farthings set
Against the terrors of the countless Debt:
But such computers, when they come to jail,
Will find that Virtues never serve as bail."

"So much to Duties: now to Learning look,
And see their priest-hood poring book on book;
Yea, books of infidels, we're told, and plays,
Put out by heathens in the wink'd on days;
The very letters are of crooked kind,
And show the strange perverseness of their mind.
Have I this Learning? When the Lord would speak
Think ye he needs the Latin or the Greek?
And lo! with all their learning, when they rise
To preach, in view the newly sermon lies;
Some low-prized stuff they purchased at the stalls,
And more like Seneca's than mine or Paul's:
Children of Bondage, how should they explain
The Spirit's freedom, while they wear a chain?
They study words, for meanings grow perplex'd
And slowly hunt for truth from text to text,

Through Greek and Hebrew:—we the meaning seek
Of that within, who every tongue can speak:
This all can witness; yet the more I know,
The more a meek and humble mind I show.
"No; let the Pope, the high and mighty priest,
Lord to the poor, and servant to the Beast:
Let bishops, priests, and prebendaries swell
With pride and fatness till their hearts rebel:
I'm meek and modest:—if I could be proud,
This crowded meeting, lo! th' amazing crowd!
Your mute attention, and your meek respect,
My spirit's fervour, and my words' effect,
Might stir th' unguarded soul: and oft to me
The Tempter speaks, whom I compel to flee;
He goes in fear, for he my force has tried,—
Such is my power! but can you call it pride?"
"No, Fellow-Pilgrims! of the things I've shown
I might be proud, were they indeed my own!
But they are lent; and well you know the source
Of all that's mine, and must confide of course;
Mine! no, I err; 'tis but consign'd to me,
And I am nought but steward and trustee."

Far other Doctrines yon Arminian speaks;
"Seek Grace," he cries, "for he shall find who seeks."
This is the ancient stock by Wesley led;
They the pure body, he the reverend head:
All innovation they with dread decline,
Their John the elder, was their John divine.
Hence, still their moving prayer, the melting hymn,
The varied accent, and the active limb:
Hence that implicit faith in Satan's might,
And their own matchless prowess in the fight.
In every act they see that lurking foe,
Let loose awhile, about the world to go:
A dragon flying round the earth, to kill
The heavenly hope, and prompt the carnal will,
Whom sainted knights attack in sinners' cause
And force the wounded victim from his paws:
Who but for them would man's whole race subdue,
For not a hireling will the foe pursue.
"Show me one Churchman who will rise and pray
Through half the night, though lab'ring all the day,
Always abounding—show me him, I say:"—
Thus cries the Preacher, and he adds, "Their sheep
Satan devours at leisure as they sleep.

Not so with us; we drive him from the fold,
For ever barking and for ever bold:
While they securely slumber, all his schemes
Take full effect,—the Devil never dreams:
Watchful and changeful through the world he goes,
And few can trace this deadliest of their foes;
But I detect, and at his work surprise
The subtle Serpent under all disguise.

"Thus to Man's soul the Foe of Souls will speak,
—'A Saint elect, you can have nought to seek;
'Why all this labour in so plain a case,
'Such care to run, when certain of the race?'
All this he urges to the carnal will,
He knows you're slothful, and would have you still:
Be this your answer,—'Satan, I will keep
'Still on the watch till you are laid asleep.'
Thus to the Christian's progress he'll retard —
'The gates of mercy are for ever barr'd;
'And that with bolts so driven and so stout,
'Ten thousand workmen cannot wrench them out.
To this deceit you have but one reply,—
Give to the Father of all Lies, the lie."

A Sister's weakness he'll by fits surprise,
His her wild laughter, his her piteous cries;
And should a pastor at her side attend,
He'll use her organs to abuse her friend:
These are possessions—unbelieving wits
Impute them all to nature: 'They're her fits,
'Caused by commotions in the nerves and brains;'—
Vain talk! but they'll be fitted for their pains.

"These are in part the ills the Foe has wrought,
And these the Churchman thinks not worth his thought
They bid the troubled try for peace and rest,
Compose their minds, and be no more distress'd;
As well might they command the passive shore
To keep secure, and be o'erflow'd no more;
To the wrong subject is their skill applied,—
To act like workmen, they should stem the tide."

"These are the Church-Physicians: they are paid
With noble fees for their advice and aid;
Yet know they not the inward pulse to feel,
To ease the anguish, or the wound to heal.
With the sick Sinner, thus their work begins:
'Do you repent you of your former sins?
Will you amend if you revive and live?
And, pardon seeking, will you pardon give?
'Have you belief in what your Lord has done,
And are you thankful?—all is well, my son.'

" A way far different ours—we thus surprise
A soul with questions, and demand replies:
" 'How dropp'd you first,' I ask, 'the legal Yoke?
What the first word the living Witness spoke?
Perceived you thunders roar and lightnings shine,
And Tempests gathering ere the Birth divine?
Did fire, and storm, and earthquake all appear
Before that still small voice, *What dost thou here?*
Hast thou by day and night, and soon and late,
Waited and watch'd before Admission-gate;
And so a pilgrim and a soldier pass'd
To Sion's hill through battle and through blast?
Then in thy way didst thou thy foe attack,
And mad'st thou proud Apollyon turn his back?'
" Heart searching things are these, and shake the mind
Yea, like the rustling of a mighty wind.
" Thus would I ask:—Nay, let me question now.
How sink my sayings in your bosoms? how?
Feel you a quickening? drops the subject deep?
Stupid and stony, No! you're all asleep;
Listless and lazy, waiting for a close,
As if at church;—do I allow repose?
Am I a legal minister? do I
With form or rubrick, rule or right comply?
Then whence this quiet, tell me, I beseech?
One might believe you heard your Rector preach,
Or his assistant dreamer:—Oh! return,
Ye times of burning, when the heart would burn,
Now hearts are ice, and you, my freezing fold,
Have spirits sunk and sad, and bosoms stony-cold.
" Oh! now again for those prevailing powers,
Which once began this mighty work of ours:
When the wide field, God's Temple, was the place
And birds flew by to catch a breath of grace;
When 'mid his timid friends and threat'ning foes,
Our zealous chief as Paul at Athens rose:
When with infernal spite and knotty clubs
The Ill-One arm'd his scoundrels and his scrubs;
And there were flying all around the spot
Brands at the Preacher, but they touch'd him not:
Stakes brought to smite him, threaten'd in his cause,
And tongues, attuned to curses, roar'd applause;
Louder and louder grew his awful tones,
Sobbing and sighs were heard, and rueful groans;
Soft women fainted, prouder man express'd
Wonder and woe, and butchers smote the breast;
Eyes wept, ears tingled; stiffening on each head,
The hair drew back and Satan howl'd and fled.

"In that soft season when the gentle breeze
Rises all round, and swells by slow degrees;
Till tempests gather, when through all the sky
The thunders rattle, and the lightnings fly;
When rain in torrents wood and vale deform,
And all is horror, hurricane, and storm:
So, when the Preacher in that glorious time,
More than clouds more melting, more than storm sublime
Dropp'd the new Word, there came a charm around:
Tremors and terrors rose upon the sound;
The stubborn spirits by his force he broke,
As the fork'd lightning rives the knotted oak:
Fear, hope, dismay, all signs of shame or grace,
Chain'd every foot, or featured every face:
Then took his sacred trump a louder swell,
And now they groan'd, they sicken'd, and they fell;
Again he sounded, and we heard the cry
Of the Word-wounded, as about to die,
Further and further spread the conquering word,
As loud he cried—'the Battle of the Lord.'
Ev'n those apart who were the sound denied,
Fell down instinctive, and in spirit died.
Nor stayed he yet—his eye, his frown, his speech,
His very gesture had a power to teach;
With outstretch'd arms, strong voice and piercing call
He won the field, and made the Dagons fall;
And thus in triumph took his glorious way,
Through scenes of horror, terror, and dismay."

LETTER V.

THE ELECTION.

The evils of the Contest, and how in part to be avoided—The Miseries endured by a Friend of the Candidate—The various liberties taken with him, who has no personal Interest in the Success—The unreasonable Expectations of Voters—The Censures of the opposing Party—The Vices as well as Follies shown in such Time of Contest—Plans and Cunning of Electors—Evils which remain after the Decision, opposed in vain by the efforts of the Friendly, and of the Successful; among whom is the Mayor—Story of his Advancement till he was raised to the Government of the Borough—These Evils not to be placed in Balance with the Liberty of the People, but are yet Subjects of just Complaint.

YES, our Election's past, and we've been free,
Somewhat as madmen without keepers be;
And such desire of Freedom has been shown,
That both the parties wish'd her all their own:
All our free smiths and cobblers in the town
Were loth to lay such pleasant freedom down;
To put the bludgeon and cockade aside,
And let us pass unhurt and undefied.
True! you might then your party's sign produce,
And so escape with only half th' abuse;
With half the danger as you walk'd along,
With rage and threat'ning but from half the throng;
This you might do, and not your fortune mend,
For where you lost a foe, you gain'd a friend;
And to distress you, vex you, and expose,
Election-friends are worse than any foes:
The party-curse is with the canvass past,
But party-friendship, for your grief, will last.
Friends of all kinds: the civil and the rude,
Who humbly wish, or boldly dare t' intrude;
These beg or take a liberty to come
(Friends should be free,) and make your house their home.
They know that warmly you their cause espouse,
And come to make their boastings and their bows:
You scorn their manners, you their words mistrust,
But you must hear them, and they know you must.
One plainly sees a friendship firm and true,
Between the noble candidate and you;

So humbly begs (and states at large the case,)
"You'll think of Bobby and the little place."
Stilling his shame by drink, a wretch will come,
And prate your wife and daughter from the room:
In pain you hear him, and at heart despise,
Yet with heroic mind your pangs disguise;
And still in patience to the sot attend,
To show what man can bear to serve a friend.
One enters hungry—not to be denied,
And takes his place and jokes—"We're of a side."
Yet worse, the proser who, upon the strength
Of his one vote, has tales of three hours' length;
This sorry rogue you bear, yet with surprise
Start at his oaths, and sicken at his lies.
Then comes there one, and tells in friendly way
What the opponents in their anger say;
All that through life has vex'd you, all abuse,
Will this kind friend in pure regard produce;
And having through your own offences run,
Adds (as appendage) what your friends have done
Has any female cousin made a trip
To Gretna Green or more vexatious slip?
Has your wife's brother, or your uncle's son,
Done aught amiss, or is he thought t' have done?
Is there of all your kindred some who lack
Vision direct, or have a gibbous back?
From your unlucky name may quips and puns
Be made by these upbraiding Goths and Huns?
To some great public character have you
Assign'd the fame to worth and talents due,
Proud of your praise?—In this, in any case,
Where the brute-spirit may affix disgrace,
These friends will smiling bring it, and the while
You silent sit, and practise for a smile.
Vain of their power, and of their value sure,
They nearly guess the tortures you endure;
Nor spare one pang—for they perceive your heart
Goes with the cause; you'd die before you'd start;
Do what they may, they're sure you'll not offend
Men who have pledged their honours to your friend
Those friends indeed, who start as in a race,
May love the sport, and laugh at this disgrace;
They have in view the glory and the prize,
Nor heed the dirty steps by which they rise:
But we their poor associates lose the fame,
Though more than partners in the toil and shame
Were this the whole; and did the time produce
But shame and toil, but riot and abuse;

We might be then from serious griefs exempt,
And view the whole with pity and contempt.
Alas! But here the vilest passions rule;
It is Seduction's, is Temptation's school;
Where vices mingle in the oddest ways,
The grossest slander and the dirtiest praise;
Flattery enough to make the vainest sick,
And clumsy stratagem, and scoundrel trick:
Nay more, your anger and contempt to cause,
These, while they fish for profit, claim applause;
Bribed, bought, and bound, they banish shame and fear,
Tell you they're staunch, and have a soul sincere;
Then talk of honour, and, if doubt's express'd,
Show where it lies, and smite upon the breast.

Among these worthies, some at first declare
For whom they vote: he then has most to spare;
Others hang off—when coming to the post
In spurring time, and then he'll spare the most:
While some demurring, wait, and find at last
The bidding languish, and the market past;
These will affect all bribery to condemn,
And be it Satan laughs, he laughs at them.

Some too are pious—One desired the Lord
To teach him where "to drop his little word;
To lend his vote where it will profit best;
Promotion came not from the east or west;
But as their freedom had promoted some,
He should be glad to know which way 't would come.
It was a naughty world, and where to sell
His precious charge, was more than he could tell.

"But you succeeded?"—True, at mighty cost
And our good friend, I fear, will think he s lost:
Inns, horses, chaises, dinners, balls, and notes;
What fill'd their purses, and what drench'd their throats
The private pension, and indulgent lease,—
Have all been granted to these friends who fleece;
Friends who will hang like burs upon his coat,
And boundless judge the value of a vote.

And though the terrors of the time be pass'd,
There still remain the scatterings of the blast:
The boughs are parted that entwined before,
And ancient harmony exists no more;
The gusts of wrath our peaceful seats deform,
And sadly flows the sighing of the storm:
Those who have gain'd are sorry for the gloom,
But they who lost, unwilling peace should come;
There open envy, here suppress'd delight,
Yet live till time shall better thoughts excite,

And so prepare us, by a six-years' truce,
Again for riot, insult, and abuse.
Our worthy Mayor, on the victorious part,
Cries out for peace, and cries with all his heart,
He, civil creature! ever does his best
To banish wrath from every voter's breast:
'Fore where," says he, with reason strong and plain,
'Where is the profit? what will anger gain?"
His short stout person he is wont to brace
In good brown broad-cloth, edged with two inch lace,
When in his seat; and still the coat seems new,
Preserved by common use of seaman's blue.
He was a Fisher from his earliest day,
And placed his nets within the Borough's bay;
Where, by his skates, his herrings, and his soles,
He liv'd, nor dream'd of Corporation-Doles:
But toiling saved, and saving, never ceased
Till he had box'd up twelvescore pounds at least:
He knew not money's power, but judged it best
Safe in his trunk to let his treasure rest:
Yet to a friend complain'd: "Sad charge, to keep
So many pounds, and then I cannot sleep:"
"Then put it out," replied the friend:—"What, give
My money up? why then I could not live:"
'Nay, but for interest place it in his hands,
Who'll give you mortgage on his house or lands."
"Oh but," said Daniel, "that's a dangerous plan,
He may be robb'd like any other man:"
"Still he is bound, and you may be at rest,
More safe the money than within your chest:
And you'll receive, from all deductions clear,
Five pounds for every hundred, every year."
"What good in that?" quoth Daniel, "for 'tis plain
If part I take, there can but part remain:"
"What! you, my friend, so skill'd in gainful things,
Have you to learn what interest money brings?"
"Not so," said Daniel, "perfectly I know,
He's the most interest who has most to show.
'True! and he'll show the more, the more he lends:
Thus he his weight and consequence extends;
For they who borrow must restore each sum,
And pay for use. What, Daniel, art thou dumb?"
For much amazed was that good man.—"Indeed!"
Said he, with gladdening eye, "will money breed?
How have I lived? I grieve, with all my heart,
For my late knowledge in this precious art:—
Five pounds for every hundred will be give?
And then the hundred?—I begin to live."

So he began, and other means he found,
As he went on, to multiply a pound:
Though blind so long to interest, all allow
That no man better understands it now:
Him in our Body-Corporate we chose,
And once among us, he above us rose;
Stepping from post to post, he reach'd the chair
And there he now reposes—that's the Mayor.
But 'tis not he, 'tis not the kinder few,
The mild, the good, who can our peace renew;
A peevish humour swells in every eye,
The warm are angry, and the cool are shy;
There is no more the social board at whist,
The good old partners are with scorn dismiss'd;
No more with dog and lantern comes the maid,
To guide the mistress when the rubbers play'd.
Sad shifts are made lest ribands blue and green
Should at one table, at one time, be seen:
On care and merit none will now rely,
'Tis party sells, what party-friends must buy;
The warmest burgess wears a bodger's coat,
And fashion gains less int'rest than a vote;
Uncheck'd the vintner still his poison vends,
For he too votes, and can command his friends.
But this admitted: be it still agreed,
These ill effects from noble cause proceed;
Though like some vile excrescences they be,
The tree they spring from is a sacred tree,
And its true produce, Strength and Liberty.
Yet if we could th' attendant ills suppress,
If we could make the sum of mischief less;
If we could warm and angry men persuade
No more man's common comforts to invade;
And that old ease and harmony re-seat
In all our meetings, so in joy to meet;
Much would of glory to the Muse ensue,
And our good Vicar would have less to do.

LETTER VI.

PROFESSIONS.—LAW.

Trades and Professions of every Kind to be found in the Borough—Its Seamen and Soldiers—Law, the Danger of the Subject—Coddrington's Offence—Attorneys increased; their splendid Appearance, how supported—Some worthy Exceptions—Spirit of Litigation, how stirred up—A Boy articled as a Clerk; his Ideas—How this Profession perverts the Judgment—Actions appear through this Medium in a false Light—Success from honest Application—Archer, a worthy Character—Swallow, a Character of different Kind—His Origin, Progress, Success, &c.

"TRADES and professions"—these are the[m]es the Muse
Left to her freedom, would forbear to choose,
But to our Borough they in truth belong,
And we, perforce, must take them in our song.
Be it then known that we can boast of these
In all denominations, ranks, degrees;
All who our numerous wants through life supply,
Who soothe us sick, attend us when we die,
Or for the dead their various talents try.
Then have we those who live by secret arts,
By hunting fortunes, and by stealing hearts;
Or who by nobler means themselves advance,
Or who subsist by charity and chance.
Say, of our native heroes shall I boast,
Born in our streets, to thunder on our coast,
Our Borough-seamen? Could the timid Muse
More patriot-ardour in their breasts infuse;
Or could she paint their merit or their skill,
She wants not love, alacrity, or will:
But needless all; that ardour is their own,
And for their deeds themselves have made them known.
Soldiers in arms! Defenders of our soil!
Who from destruction save us; who from spoil
Protect the sons of peace, who traffic or who toil;
Would I could duly praise you; that each deed
Your foes might honour, and your friends might read:
This too is needless: you've imprinted well
Your powers, and told what I should feebly tell:
Beside, a Muse like mine, to satire prone,
Would fail in themes where there is praise alone.
—Law shall I sing, or what to law belongs?
Alas! there may be danger in such songs;

A foolish rhyme, 'tis said, a trifling thing,
The law found treason, for it touch'd the King.
But Kings have mercy, in these happy times,
Or surely *One* had suffer'd for his rhymes;
Our glorious Edwards and our Henrys bold,
So touch'd had kept the reprobate in hold;
But he escaped,—nor fear, thank Heav'n, have I,
Who love my king, for such offence to die
But I am taught the danger would be much,
If these poor lines should one *attorney* touch—
(One of those *Limbs* of Law who're always here;
The *Heads* come down to guide them twice a year.)
I might not swing, indeed, but he in sport
Would whip a rhymer on from court to court;
Stop him in each, and make him pay for all
The long proceedings in that dreaded Hall:—
Then let my numbers flow discreetly on,
Warn'd by the fate of luckless Coddrington,
Lest some *attorney* (pardon me the name)
Should wound a poor *solicitor* for fame.

One Man of Law in George the Second's reign
Was all our frugal fathers would maintain;
He too was kept for forms; a man of peace,
To frame a contract, or to draw a lease:
He had a clerk, with whom he used to write
All the day long, with whom he drank at night;
Spare was his visage, moderate his bill,
And he so kind, men doubted of his skill.

Who thinks of this, with some amazement sees,
For one so poor, three flourishing at ease;
Nay, one in splendour!—see that mansion tall,
That lofty door, the far-resound...g hall;
Well-furnish'd rooms, plate shining on the board,
Gay liveried lads, and cellar proudly stored:
Then say how comes it that such fortunes crown
These sons of strife, these terrors of the town?

Lo! that small Office! there th' incautious guest
Goes blindfold in, and that maintains the rest;
There in his web, th' observant spider lies,
And peers about for fat intruding flies;
Doubtful at first, he hears the distant hum,
And feels them flutt'ring as they nearer come;
They buzz and blink, and doubtfully they tread
On the strong bird-lime of the utmost thread;
But when they're once entangled by the gin,
With what an eager clasp he draws them in;
Nor shall they 'scape, till after long delay,
And all that sweetens life is drawn away.

"Nay, this," you cry, "is common-place the tale
Of petty tradesmen o'er their evening ale;
There are who, living by the legal pen,
Are held in honour,—'honourable men.'"
Doubtless—there are who hold manorial courts,
Or whom the trust of powerful friends supports;
Or who, by labouring through a length of time,
Have pick'd their way, unsullied by a crime.
These are the few.—In this, in every place,
Fix the litigious rupture stirring-race;
Who to contention as to trade are led,
To whom dispute and strife are bliss and bread.
There is a doubtful Pauper, and we think
'Tis not with us to give him meat and drink;
There is a Child, and 'tis not mighty clear
Whether the mother lived with us a year;
A road's indicted, and our seniors doubt
If in our proper boundary or without.
But what says our Attorney? He, our friend,
Tells us 'tis just and manly to contend
"What! to a neighbouring parish yield your cause,
While you have money, and the nation laws?
What! lose without a trial, that which, tried,
May—nay it must—be given on our side?
All men of spirit would contend; such men
Than lose a pound would rather hazard ten.
What! be imposed on? No! a British soul
Despises imposition, hates control;
The law is open; let them, if they dare,
Support their cause; the Borough need not spare:
All I advise is vigour and good-will:
Is it agreed then?—Shall I file a bill?"
The trader, grazier, merchant, priest, and all,
Whose sons aspiring, to Professions call,
Choose from their lads some bold and subtle boy,
And judge him fitted for this grave employ:
Him a keen old practitioner admits,
To write five years and exercise his wits:
The youth has heard—it is in fact his creed—
Mankind dispute, that Lawyers may be fee'd:
Jails, bailiffs, writs, all terms and threats of law,
Grow now familiar as once top and taw;
Rage, hatred, fear, the mind's severer ills
All bring employment, all augment his bills:
As feels the surgeon for the mangled limb
The mangled mind is but a job for him
Thus taught to think, these legal reasoners draw
Morals and maxims from their views of law:

They cease to judge by precepts taught in schools
By man's plain sense, or by religious rules;
No! nor by law itself, in truth discern'd,
But as its statutes may be warp'd and turn'd:
How they should judge of man: his word and deed,
They in their books and not their bosoms read;
Of some good act you speak with just applause,
"No, no!" says he, "'t would be a losing cause."
Blame you some tyrant's deed?—he answers, "Nay
He'll get a verdict: heed you what you say."
Thus to conclusions from examples led,
The heart resigns all judgment to the head;
Law, law alone for ever kept in view,
His measures guide, and rules his conscience too;
Of ten commandments, he confesses three
Are yet in force, and tells you which they be,
As Law instructs him, thus: "Your neighbour's wife
You must not take, his chattels, nor his life;
Break these decrees, for damage you must pay;
These you must reverence, and the rest—you may."

Law was design'd to keep a state in peace;
To punish robbery, that wrong might cease;
To be impregnable: a constant fort,
To which the weak and injured might resort:
But these perverted minds its force employ,
Not to protect mankind, but to annoy;
And long as ammunition can be found,
Its lightning flashes and its thunders sound.

Or law with lawyers is an ample still,
Wrought by the passions' heat with chymic skill;
While the fire burns, the gains are quickly made,
And freely flow the profits of the trade;
Nay, when the fierceness fails, these artists blow
The dying fire, and make the embers glow,
As long as they can make the smaller profits flow;
At length the process of itself will stop,
When they perceive they've drawn out every drop.

Yet, I repeat, there are, who nobly strive
To keep the sense of moral worth alive;
Men who would starve, ere mainly deign to live
On what deception and chicanery give:
And these at length succeed: they have their strife
Their apprehensions, stops, and rubs in life:
But honour, application, care, and skill,
Shall bend opposing fortune to their will.

Of such is *Archer*, he who keeps in awe
Contending parties by his threats of law:
He, roughly honest, has been long a guide
In Borough-business, on the conquering side;

And seen so much of both sides, and so long,
He thinks the bias of man's mind goes wrong
Thus, though he's friendly, he is still severe,
Surly though kind, suspiciously sincere:
So much he's seen of baseness in the mind,
That, while a friend to man, he scorns mankind;
He knows the human heart, and sees with dread
By slight temptation, how the strong are led;
He knows how interest can asunder rend
The bond of parent, master, guardian, friend;
To form a new and a degrading tie
'Twixt needy vice and tempting villany.
Sound in himself, yet when such flaws appear,
He doubts of all, and learns that self to fear:
For where so dark the moral view is grown,
A timid conscience trembles for her own;
The pitchy-taint of general vice is such
As daubs the fancy, and yea dread the touch.

Far unlike him was one in former times
Famed for the spoil he gather'd by his crimes;
Who, while his brethren nibbling held their prey
He like an eagle seized and bore the whole away.
Swallow, a poor Attorney, brought his boy
Up at his desk, and gave him his employ,
He would have bound him to an honest trade
Could preparations have been duly made.
The clerkship ended, both the sire and son
Together did what business could be done;
Sometimes they'd luck to stir up small disputes
Among their friends, and raise them into suits:
Though close and hard, the father was content
With this resource, now old and indolent:
But his young Swallow gaping and alive
To fiercer feelings, was resolved to thrive;—
"Father," he said, "but little can they win,
Who hunt in couples where the game is thin;
Let's part in peace, and each pursue his gain,
Where it may start—our love may yet remain."
The parent growl'd, he couldn't think that love
Made the young cockatrice his den remove,
But, taught by habit, he the truth suppress'd,
Forced a frank look, and said he "thought it best."
Not long they'd parted ere dispute arose;
The game they hunted quickly made them foes:
Some horse, the father by his art had won,
Seem'd a fit cause of contest to the son,
Who raised a claimant, and then found a way,
By a staunch witness to secure his prey

The people cursed him, but in times of need
Trusted in one so certain to succeed:
By Law's dark by-ways he had stored his mind
With wicked knowledge, how to cheat mankind.
Few are the freeholds in our ancient town;
A copyright from heir to heir came down.
From whence some heat arose, when there was doubt
In point of heirship; but the fire went out,
Till our Attorney had the art to raise
The dying spark, and blow it to a blaze.
For this he now began his friends to treat:
His way to starve them was to make them eat,
And drink oblivious draughts—to his applause,
It must be said, he never starved a cause;
He'd roast and boil'd upon his board; the boast
Of half his victims was his boil'd and roast;
And these at every hour:—he seldom took
Aside his client, till he'd praised his cook;
Nor to an office led him, there in pain
To give his story and go out again;
But first, the brandy and the chine were seen,
And then the business came by starts between.
"Well, if 'tis so, the house to you belongs;
But have you money to redress these wrongs?
Nay, look not sad, my friend; if you're correct,
You'll find the friendship that you'd not expect."
If right the man, the house was Swallow's own;
If wrong, his kindness and good will were shown:
"Rogue!" "Villain!" "Scoundrel!" cried the losers all
He let them cry, for what would that recall?
At length he left us, took a village seat,
And like a vulture look'd abroad for meat:
The Borough-booty, give it all its praise,
Had only served the appetite to raise:
But if from simple heirs he drew their land,
He might a noble feast at will command;
Still he proceeded by his former rules,
His bait, their pleasures, when he fish'd for fools—
Flagons and bunches on his board were placed,
And subtle avarice look'd like thoughtless waste:
Most of his friends, though youth from him had fled,
Were young, were minors, of their sires in dread;
Or those whom widow'd mothers kept in bounds,
And check'd their generous rage for steeds and hounds;
Or such as travell'd cross the land to view
A Christian's conflict with a boxing Jew:
Some too had run upon Newmarket heath
With so much speed that they were out of breath;

Others had tasted claret, till they now
To humbler port would turn, and knew not how.
All these for favours would to Swallow run,
Who never sought their thanks for all he'd done.
He kindly took them by the hand, then bow'd
Politely low, and thus his love avow'd—
(For he'd a way that many mixed polite,
A cunning dog—he'd fawn before he'd bite)—
"Observe, my friends, the frailty of our race
When age numbs us—let me state a case:
There's our friend Rupert—we shall soon redress
His present evil—drink to our success—
I flatter not; but did you ever see
Limbs better turn'd? a prettier boy than he?
His senses all acute, his passions such
As nature gave—she never does too much;
His the bold wish the cup of joy to drain,
And strength to bear it without qualm or pain.
"Now view his father as he dozing lies,
Whose senses wake not when he opes his eyes;
Who slips and shuffles when he means to walk,
And lisps and gabbles if he tries to talk:
Feeling he's none—he could as soon destroy
The earth itself, as aught it holds enjoy:
A nurse attends him to lay straight his limbs,
Present his gruel, and respect his whims:
Now shall this dotard from our hero hold
His lands and lordships? Shall he hide his gold?
That which he cannot use, and dare not show,
And will not give—why longer should he owe?
Yet, 't would be murder should I we snap the locks
And take the thing he worships from the box;
So let him dote and dream, but, till he die,
Shall not our generous heir receive supply?
For ever sitting on the river's brink,
And ever thirsty, shall he fear to drink?
The means are simple, let him only wish.
Then say he's willing, and I'll fill his dish.
They all applauded, and not least the boy,
Who now replied, "It fill'd his heart with joy
To find he needed not deliv'rance crave
Of death, or wish the Justice in the grave;
Who, while he spent, would every art retain,
Of luring home the scatter'd gold again;
Just as a fountain gaily spirts and plays
With what returns in still and secret ways."
Short was the dream of bliss; he quickly found
His father's acres all were Swallow's ground.

Yet to those arts would other heroes lend
A willing ear, and Swallow was their friend;
Ever successful, some began to think
That Satan help'd him to his pen and ink;
And shrewd suspicions ran about the place,
"There was a compact"—I must leave the case.
But of the parties, had the fiend been one,
The business could not have been speedier done:
Still when a man has angled day and night,
The silliest gudgeons will refuse to bite:
So Swallow tried no more: but if they came
To seek his friendship that remain'd the same:
Thus he retired in peace, and some would say
He'd balk'd his partner, and had learn'd to pray.
To this some zealots lent an ear, and sought
How Swallow felt, then said "a change is wrought
'T was true there wanted all the signs of grace,
But there were strong professions in their place:
Then, too, the less that men from him expect,
The more the praise to the converting sect:
He had not yet subscribed to all their creed,
Nor own'd a Call, but he confess'd the need:
His acquiescent speech, his gracious look,
That pure attention, when the brethren spoke,
Was all contrition,—he had felt the wound,
And with confession would again be sound.

True, Swallow's board had still the sumptuous treat,
But could they blame? the warmest zealots eat:
He drank—'t was needful his poor nerve to brace;
He swore—'t was habit; he was grieved—'t was grace
What could they do a new-born zeal to nurse?
"His wealth's undoubted—let him hold our purse.
He'll add his bounty, and the house we'll raise
Hard by the church, and gather all her strays:
We'll watch her sinners as they home retire,
And pluck the brands from the devouring fire."

Alas! such speech was but an empty boast;
The good men reckon'd, but without their host;
Swallow, delighted, took the trusted store,
And own'd the sum: they did not ask for more,
Till more was needed; when they call'd for aid—
And had it?—No, their agent was afraid:
"Could he but know to whom he should refund,
He would most gladly—nay, he'd go beyond;
But when such numbers claim'd, when some were gone
And others going—he must hold it on:
The Lord would help them."—Loud their anger grew,
And while they threat'ning from his door withdrew,
He bow'd politely low, and bade them all adieu.

But lives the man by whom such deeds are done?
Yes, many such—but Swallow's race is run;
His name is lost,—for though his sons have name,
It is not his, they all escape the shame;
Nor is there vestige now of all he had,
His means are wasted, for his heir was mad:
Still we of Swallow as a monster speak,
A hard bad man, who prey'd upon the weak.

LETTER VII.

PROFESSIONS.—PHYSIC.

The Worth and Excellence of the true Physician—Merit, no the sole Cause of Success—Modes of advancing Reputation—Motives of Medical Men for publishing their Works—The great evil of Quackery—Present State of advertising Quacks—Their Hazard—Some fail, and why—Causes of Success—How Men of understanding are prevailed upon to have Recourse to Empirics, and to permit their names to be advertised—Evils of Quackery: to nervous Females: to Youth: to Infants—History of an Advertising Empiric, &c.

Next, to a graver tribe we turn our view,
And yield the praise to worth and science due;
But this with serious words and sober style,
For these are friends with whom we seldom smile.
Helpers of Men they're call'd, and we confess
Theirs the deep study, theirs the lucky guess;
We own that numbers join with care and skill,
A temperate judgment, a devoted will;
Men who suppress their feelings, but who feel
The painful symptoms they delight to heal;
Patient in all their trials, they sustain
The starts of passion, the reproach of pain;
With hearts affected, but with looks serene;
Intent they wait through all the solemn scene;
Glad if a hope should rise from nature's strife,
To aid their skill and save the lingering life;
But this must virtue's generous effort be,
And spring from nobler motives than a fee:
To the Physician of the Soul, and these,
Turn the distress'd for safety, hope, and ease.

But as physicians of that nobler kind
Have their warm zealots, and their sectaries blind;

So among these for knowledge most renown'd,
Are dreamers strange, and stubborn bigots found:
Some, too, admitted to this honour'd name,
Have, without learning, found a way to fame;
And some by learning—young physicians write,
To set their merit in the fairest light:
With them a treatise is a bait that draws
Approving voices—'tis to gain applause.
And to exalt them in the public view,
More than a life of worthy toil could do.
When 't is proposed to make the man renown'd,
In every age, convenient doubts abound;
Convenient themes in every period start,
Which he may treat with all the pomp of art:
Curious conjectures he may always make,
And either side of dubious questions take:
He may a system broach, or, if he please,
Start new opinions of an old disease:
Or may some simple in the woodland trace,
And be its patron, till it runs its race;
As rustic damsels from their woods are won,
And live in splendour till their race be run:
It weighs not much on what their powers be shown
When all his purpose is to make them known.

To show the world what long experience gains,
Requires not courage, though it calls for pains;
But at life's outset to inform mankind,
Is a bold effort of a valiant mind.

The great good man, for noblest cause displays
What many labours taught, and many days;
These sound instruction from experience give,
The others show us how they mean to live.
That they have genius, and they hope mankind
Will to its efforts be no longer blind.

There are, beside, whom powerful friends advance
Whom fashion favours, person, patrons, chance:
And merit sighs to see a fortune made
By daring rashness or by dull parade.

But these are trifling evils; there is one
Which walks uncheck'd, and triumphs in the sun
There was a time, when we beheld the Quack,
On public stage, the licensed trade attack;
He made his labour'd speech with poor parade·
And then a laughing zany lent him aid:
Smiling we pass'd him, but we felt the while
Pity so much, that soon we ceased to smile;
Assured that fluent speech and flow'ry vest
Disguised the troubles of a man distress'd:—

But now our Quacks are gamesters, and they play
With craft and skill to ruin and betray;
With monstrous promise they delude the mind,
And thrive on all that tortures human-kind.
Void of all honour, avaricious, rash,
The daring tribe compound their boasted trash—
Tincture or syrup, lotion, drop or pill;
All tempt the sick to trust the lying bill;
And twenty names of cobblers turn'd to squires,
Aid the bold language of these blushless liars.
There are among them those who cannot read,
And yet they'll buy a patent, and succeed;
Will dare to promise dying sufferers aid,
For who, when dead, can threaten or upbraid?
With cruel avarice still they recommend
More draughts, more syrup to the journey's end:
"I feel it not;"—"Then take it every hour:"
"It makes me worse;"—"Why then it shows its power:"
"I fear to die;"—"Let not your spirits sink,
You're always safe, while you believe and drink."
How strange to add, in this nefarious trade,
That men of parts are dupes by dunces made:
That creatures, nature meant should clean our streets,
Have purchased lands and mansions, parks and seats:
Wretches with conscience so obtuse, they leave
Their untaught sons their parents to deceive:
And when they're laid upon their dying bed,
No thought of murder comes into their head;
Nor one revengeful ghost to them appears,
To fill the soul with penitential fears.
Yet not the whole of this imposing train
Their gardens, seats, and carriages obtain;
Chiefly, indeed they to the robbers fall,
Who are most fitted to disgrace them all:
But there is hazard—patients must be bought,
Venders and puffers for the poison sought;
And then in many a paper through the year,
Must cures and cases, oaths and proofs appear:
Men snatch'd from graves, as they were dropping in,
Their lungs cough'd up, their bones pierced through their skin;
Their liver all one scirrhus, and the frame
Poison'd with evils which they dare not name;
Men who spent all upon physicians' fees,
Who never slept, nor had a moment's ease,
Are now as roaches sound, and all as brisk as bees.
If the sick gudgeons to the bait attend,
And come in shoals, the angler gains his end:

But should the advertising cash be spent,
Ere yet the town has due attention lent,
Then bursts the bubble, and the hungry cheat
Pines for the bread he ill deserves to eat;
It is a lottery, and he shares perhaps
The rich man's feast, or begs the pauper's scraps.

From powerful causes spring th' empiric's gains,
Man's love of life, his weakness, and his pains;
These first induce him the vile trash to try,
Then lend his name, that other men may buy:
This love of life, which in our nature rules,
To vile imposture makes us dupes and tools;
Then pain compels th' impatient soul to seize
On promised hopes of instantaneous ease;
And weakness too with every wish complies,
Worn out and won by importunities.

Troubled with something in your bile or blood,
You think your doctor does you little good;
And grown impatient, you require in haste
The nervous cordial, nor dislike the taste;
It comforts, heals, and strengthens: nay, you think
It makes you better every time you drink;
"Then lend your name"—you're loth, but yet confess
Its powers are great, and so you acquiesce:
Yet think a moment, ere your name you lend,
With whose 'tis placed, and what you recommend;
Who tipples brandy will some comfort feel,
But will he to the med'cine set his seal?
Wait, and you'll find the cordial you admire
Has ad led fuel to your fever's fire:
Say, should a robber chance your purse to spare,
Would you the honour of the man declare?
Would you assist his purpose? swell his crime?
Besides he might not spare a second time.

Compassion sometimes sets the fatal sign,
The man was poor, and humbly begg'd a line;
Else how should noble names and titles back
The spreading praise of some adventrous quack?
But be the moment watches, and entreats
Your honour's name,—your honour joins the cheats,
You judged the med'cine harmless, and you lent
What help you could, and with the best intent;
But can it please you, thus to league with all
Whom he can beg or bribe to swell the scrawl?
Would you these wrappers with your name adorn,
Which hold the poison for the yet unborn?

No class escapes them—from the poor man's pay,
The nostrum takes no trifling part away;

See! those square patent bottles from the shop
Now decoration to the cupboard's top;
And there a favourite hoard you'll find within,
Companions meet! the julep and the gin
Time too with cash is wasted; 'tis the fate
Of real helpers to be call'd too late;
This find the sick, when (time and patience gone)
Death with a tenfold terror hurries on.
Suppose the case surpasses human skill,
There comes a quack to flatter weakness still;
What greater evil can a flatterer do,
Than from himself to take the sufferer's view?
To turn from sacred thoughts his reasoning powers,
And rob a sinner of his dying hours?
Yet this they dare, and craving to the last,
In hope's strong bondage hold their victim fast:
For soul or body no concern have they,
All their inquiry, "Can the patient pay?
And will he swallow draughts until his dying day?"
Observe what ills to nervous females flow,
When the heart flutters, and the pulse is low;
If once induced these cordial sips to try,
All feel the ease, and few the danger fly;
For, while obtain'd, of drams they've all the force,
And when denied, then drams are the resource.
Nor these the only evils—there are those
Who for the troubled mind prepare repose;
They write: the young are tenderly address'd,
Much danger hinted, much concern express'd;
They dwell on freedoms lads are prone to take,
Which makes the doctor tremble for their sake;
Still if the youthful patient will but trust
In one so kind, so pitiful and just:
If he will take the tonic all the time,
And hold but moderate intercourse with crime;
The sage will gravely give his honest word,
That strength and spirits shall be both restored:
In plainer English—if you mean to sin,
Fly to the drops, and instantly begin.
Who would not lend a sympathizing sigh,
To hear yon infant's pity-moving cry?
That feeble sob, unlike the new-born note,
Which came with vigour from the op'ning throat;
When air and light first rush'd on lungs and eyes,
And there was life and spirit in the cries;
Now an abortive, faint attempt to weep,
Is all we hear; sensation is asleep.

The boy was healthy, and at first express'd
His feelings loudly when he fail'd to rest,
When cramm'd with food, and tighten'd every limb
To cry aloud, was what pertain'd to him,
Then the good nurse, (who, had she borne a brain,
Had sought the cause that made her babe complain,)
Has all her efforts, loving soul! applied
To set the cry, and not the cause, aside:
She gave her powerful sweet without remorse,
The sleeping cordial—she had tried its force,
Repeating oft: the infant, freed from pain,
Rejected food, but took the dose again,
Sinking to sleep; while she her joy express'd,
That her dear charge could sweetly take his rest:
Soon may she spare her cordial; not a doubt
Remains, but quickly he will rest without.

This moves our grief and pity, and we sigh
To think what numbers from these causes die;
But what contempt and anger should we show,
Did we the lives of these impostors know!

Ere for the world's I left the cares of school,
One I remember who assumed the fool;
A part well suited—when the idler boys
Would shout around him, and he loved the noise:
They called him Neddy:—Neddy had the art
To play with skill his ignominious part;
When he his trifles would for sale display,
And act the mimic for a school boy's pay.
For many years he plied his humble trade,
And used his tricks and talents to persuade;
The fellow barely read, but chanced to look
Among the fragments of a tatter'd book;
Where, after many efforts made to spell
One puzzling word, he found it *oxymel;*
A potent thing, 't was said to cure the ills
Of ailing lungs—the *oxymel of squills;*
Squills he procured, but found the bitter strong
And most unpleasant; none would take it long;
But the pure acid and the sweet would make
A med'cine numbers would for pleasure take.

There was a fellow near, an artful knave,
Who knew the plan, and much assistance gave;
He wrote the puffs, and every talent plied
To make it sell: it sold, and then he died.

Now all the profit fell to Ned's control,
And Pride and Avarice quarrell'd for his soul;
When mighty profits by the trash were made,
Pride built a palace, Avarice groan'd and paid;

Pride placed the signs of grandeur all about,
And Avarice barr'd his friends and children out.
Now see him Doctor! yes, the idle fool,
The butt, the robber of the lads at school;
Who then knew nothing, nothing since acquired,
Became a doctor, honour'd and admired;
His dress, his trown, his dignity were such,
Some who had known him thought his knowledge much
Nay, men of skill, of apprehension quick,
Spite of their knowledge, trusted him when sick·
Though he could neither reason, write, nor spell,
They yet had hope his trash would make them well;
And while they scorn'd his parts, they took his oxymel.
Oh! when his nerves had once received a shock,
Sir Isaac Newton might have gone to Rock:
Hence impositions of the grossest kind,
Hence thought is feeble, understanding blind;
Hence sums enormous by those cheats are made,
And deaths unnumber'd by their dreadful trade.
Alas! in vain is my contempt express'd,
To stronger passions are their words address'd;
To pain, to fear, to terror, their appeal,
To those who, weakly reasoning, strongly feel.
What then our hopes?—perhaps there may by law
Be method found, these pests to curb and awe;
Yet in this land of freedom, law is slack
With any being to commence attack:
Then let us trust to science—there are those
Who scan their falsehoods and their frauds disclose,
All their vile trash detect, and their low tricks expose
Perhaps their numbers may in time confound
Their arts—as scorpions give themselves the wound.
For when these curers dwell in every place,
While of the cured we not a man can trace,
Strong truth may then the public mind persuade
And all the fruits of this nefarious trade.

LETTER VIII.

TRADES.

No extensive manufactories in the Borough: yet considerable fortunes made there—Ill Judgment of Parents in disposing of their Sons—The best educated not the most likely to succeed—Instance—Want of Success compensated by the lenient Power of some Avocations—The Naturalist—The Weaver an Entomologist, &c.—A Prize-Flower—Story of Walter and William.

Of manufactures, trade, inventions, rare.
Steam-towers and looms, you'd know our Borough's share—
'Tis small: we boast not these rich subjects here,
Who hazard thrice ten thousand pounds a year;
We've no huge buildings, where incessant noise
Is made by springs and spindles, girls and boys;
Where, 'mid such thundering sounds, the maiden's song
Is "Harmony in Uproar" all day long.
Still common minds with us in common trade,
Have gain'd more wealth than ever student made;
And yet a merchant, when he gives his son
His college learning, thinks his duty done;
A way to wealth he leaves his boy to find,
Just when he's made for the discovery blind.
Jones and his wife perceived their elder boy
Took to his learning, and it gave them joy;
This they encouraged, and were bless'd to see
Their son a fellow with a high degree;
A living fell, he married, and his sire
Declar'd it was all a father could require;
Children then bless'd them, and when letters came,
The parents proudly told each grandchild's name
Meantime the sons at home in trade were placed,
Money their object—just the father's taste;
Saving he lived and long, and when he died,
He gave them all his fortune to divide:
"Martin," said he, "at vast expense was taught;
He gain'd his wish, and has the case he sought."
Thus the good priest (the Christian scholar!) finds
What estimate is made by vulgar minds;
He sees his brothers, who had every gift
Of thriving, now assisted in their thrift;
While he whom learning, habits, all prevent,
Is largely mulct for each impediment.

Yet let us own that Trade has much of chance,
Not all the careful by their care advance;
With the same parts and prospects, one a seat
Builds for himself; one finds it in the Fleet.
Then to the wealthy you will see denied,
Comforts and joys that with the poor abide:
There are who labour through the year, and yet
No more have gain'd than—not to be in debt;
Who still maintain the same laborious course,
Yet pleasure hails them from some favourite source
And health, amusements, children, wife, or friend,
With life's dull views their consolations blend.

Nor these alone possess the lenient power
Of soothing life in the desponding hour;
Some favourite studies, some delightful care,
The mind, with trouble and distresses, share;
And by a coin, a flower, a verse, a boat,
The stagnant spirits have been set afloat:
They pleased at first, and then the habit grew,
Till the fond heart no higher pleasure knew;
Till, from all cares and other comforts freed,
Th' important nothing took in life the lead.

With all his phlegm, it broke a Dutchman's heart,
At a vast price with one loved root to part:
And toys like these fill many a British mind,
Although their hearts are found of firmer kind.

Oft have I smiled the happy pride to see
Of humble tradesmen, in their evening glee:
When of some pleasing, fancied good possess'd,
Each grew alert, was busy, and was bless'd:
Whether the call-bird yield the hour's delight,
Or, magnified in microscope, the mite:
Or whether tumblers, croppers, carriers seize
The gentle mind, they rule it and they please.
There is my friend the Weaver; strong desires
Reign in his breast; 't is beauty he admires:
See! to the shady grove he wings his way,
And feels in hope the raptures of the day—
Eager he looks; and soon, to glad his eyes,
From the sweet bower, by nature form'd, arise
Bright troops of virgin moths and fresh-born butterflies
Who broke that morning from their half-year's sleep,
To fly o'er flowers where they were wont to creep

Above the sovereign oak, a sovereign skims
The purple Emp'ror, strong in wing and limbs:
There fair Camilla takes her flight serene,
Adonis blue and Paphia silver-queen;
With every flitty fly from mead or bower,
And hungry Sphinx who threads the honey'd flower,

She o'er the Larkspur's bed, where sweets abound,
Views ev'ry bell, and hums th' approving sound;
Poised on her busy plumes, with feeling nice
She draws from every flower, nor tries a floret twice.
He fears no bailiff's wrath, no baron's blame,
His is untax'd and undisputed game;
Nor less the place of curious plant he knows;
He both his Flora and his Fauna shows;
For him is blooming in its rich array
The glorious flower which bore the palm away;
In vain a rival tried his utmost art,
His was the prize, and joy o'erflow'd his heart.
"This, this! is beauty; cast, I pray, your eyes
On this my glory! see the grace! the size!
Was ever stem so tall, so stout, so strong,
Exact in breadth, in just proportion, long!
These brilliant hues are all distinct and clear,
No kindred tint, no blending streaks between;
This is no shaded, run-off, pin eyed thing,
A king of flowers, a flower for England's king:
I own my pride, and thank the favouring star,
Which shed such beauty on my fair Bizarre."
Thus may the poor the cheap indulgence seize,
While the most wealthy pine and pray for ease;
Content not always waits upon success,
And more may he enjoy who profits less.
Walter and *William* took (their father dead)
Jointly the trade to which they both were bred;
When fix'd, they married, and they quickly found
With due success their honest labours crown'd:
Few were their losses, but although a few,
Walter was vex'd, and somewhat peevish grew:
"You put your trust in every pleading fool,"
Said he to William, and grew strange and cool.
'Brother forbear," he answer'd; "take your due,
Nor let the lack of caution injure you:"
Half friends they parted,—better so to close,
Than longer wait to part entirely foes.
Walter had knowledge, prudence, jealous care;
He let no idle views his bosom share;
He never thought nor felt for other men—
"Let one mind one, and all are minded then."
Friends he respected, and believed them just,
But they were men, and he would no man trust;
He tried and watch'd his people day and night,—
The good it harm'd not; for the bad 't was right:
He could their humours bear, nay disrespect.
But he could yield no pardon to neglect;

That all about him were of him afraid,
"Was right," he said—"so should we be obey'd."
These merchant-maxims, much good fortune too,
And ever keeping one grand point in view,
To vast amount his once small portion drew.
William was kind and easy; he complied
With all requests, or grieved when he denied;
To please his wife he made a costly trip,
To please his child he let a bargain slip;
Prone to compassion, mild with the distress'd,
He bore with all who poverty profess'd,
And some would he assist, nor one would he arrest.
He had some loss at sea, bad debts at land,
His clerk absconded with some bills in hand,
And plans so often fail'd that he no longer plann'd
To a small house (his brother's) he withdrew,
At easy rent—the man was not a Jew;
And there his losses and his cares he bore,
Nor found that want of wealth could make him poor.
No, he in fact was rich; nor could he move,
But he was follow'd by the looks of love;
All he had suffer'd, every former grief,
Made those around more studious in relief;
He saw a cheerful smile in every face,
And lost all thoughts of error and disgrace.
Pleasant it was to see them in their walk
Round their small garden, and to hear them talk
Free are their children, but their love refrains
From all offence—none murmurs, none complains;
Whether a book amused them, speech or play,
Their looks were lively, and their hearts were gay,
There no forced efforts for delight were made,
Joy came with prudence, and without parade;
Their common comforts they had all in view,
Light were their troubles, and their wishes few;
Thrift made them easy for the coming day,
Religion took the dread of death away;
A cheerful spirit still ensured content,
And love smiled round them wheresoe'er they went.
Walter, meantime, with all his wealth's increase,
Gain'd many points, but could not purchase peace.
When he withdrew from business for an hour,
Some fled his presence, all confess'd his power;
He sought affection, but received instead
Fear undisguised, and love-repelling dread;
He look'd around him—"Harriet, dost thou love?"
"I do my duty," said the timid dove;
'Good Heaven, your duty! prithee tell me now—
To love and honour—was not that your vow?

Come, my good Harriet, I would gladly seek
Your inmost thought—Why can't the woman speak?
Have you not all things?"—"Sir, do I complain?"—
"No, that's my part, which I perform in vain;
I want a simple answer, and direct—
But you evade; yes! 'tis as I suspect.
Come then, my children! Watt! upon your knees
Vow that you love me."—"Yes, sir, if you please"—
"Again! By Heav'n, it mads me, I require
Love, and they'll do whatever I desire:
Thus too my people shun me; I would spend
A thousand pounds to get a single friend;
I would be happy—I have means to pay
For love and friendship, and you run away;
Ungrateful creatures! why, you seem to dread
My very looks; I know you wish me dead.
Come hither, Nancy! you must hold me dear;
Hither, I say: why! what have you to fear?
You see I'm gentle—Come, you trifler, come:
My God! she trembles!—Idiot, leave the room!
Madam! your children hate me; I suppose
They know their cue: you make them all my foes;
I've not a friend in all the world—not one.
I'd be a bankrupt sooner; nay, 'tis done;
In every better hope of life I fail,
You're all tormentors, and my house a jail;
Out of my sight! I'll sit and make my will—
What, glad to go? stay, devils, and be still:
'Tis to your Uncle's cot you wish to run,
To learn to live at ease and be undone:
Him you can love, who lost his whole estate,
And I, who gain you fortunes, have your hate;
'Tis in my absence, you yourselves enjoy:
Tom! are you glad to lose me? tell me, boy:
Yes! does he answer?—Yes! upon my soul;
No awe, no fear, no duty, no control!
Away! away! ten thousand devils seize
All I possess, and plunder where they please!
What's wealth to me? yes, yes! it gives me sway,
And you shall feel it—Go! begone, I say."

LETTER IX.

AMUSEMENTS.

Common Amusements of a Bathing-place—Morning Rides, Walks, &c.—Company resorting to the Town—Different Choice of Lodgings—Cheap Indulgences—Sea-side Walks—Wealthy Invalid—Summer Evening on the Sands—Sea Productions—"Water parted from the Sea"—Winter Views serene—In what cases to be avoided—Sailing upon the River—A small Islet of Sand off the Coast—Visited by Company—Covered by the Flowing of the Tide—Adventure in that Place.

Of our Amusements ask you?—We amuse
Ourselves and friends with sea-side walks and views,
Or take a morning ride, a novel, or the news;
Or, seeking nothing, glide about the street,
And so engaged with various parties meet:
Awhile we stop, discourse of wind and tide,
Bathing and books, the ruffle and the ride:
Thus, with the aid which shops and sailing give,
Life passes on: 't is labour, but we live.
When evening comes, our invalids awake,
Nerves cease to tremble, heads forbear to ache;
Then cheerful meals the sunken spirits raise,
Cards or the dance, wine, visiting, or plays.
Soon as the season comes, and crowds arrive,
To their superior rooms the wealthy drive;
Others look round for lodging snug and small,
Such is their taste—they've hatred to a hall;
Hence one his favourite habitation gets,
The brick-floor'd parlour which the butcher lets;
Where, through his single light, he may regard
The various business of a common yard,
Bounded by backs of buildings form'd of clay,
By stable, sties, and coops, et cætera.
The needy-vain, themselves awhile to shun,
For dissipation to these dog-holes run;
Where each (assuming petty pomp) appears,
And quite forgets the shopboard and the shears.
For them are cheap amusements: they may slip
Beyond the town and take a private dip;
When they may urge that, to be safe they mean,
They've heard there's danger in a light machine;

They too can gratis move the quays about,
And gather kind replies to every doubt;
There they a pacing, lounging tribe may view,
The stranger's guides, who've little else to do;
The Borough's placemen, where no more they gain
Than keeps them idle, civil, poor, and vain.
Then may the poorest with the wealthy look
On ocean, glorious page of Nature's book!
May see its varying views in every hour,
All softness now, then rising with all power,
As sleeping to invite, or threat'ning to devour:
'Tis this which gives us all our choicest views;
Its waters heal us, and its shores amuse.

See! those fair nymphs upon that rising strand,
Yon long salt lake has parted from the land;
Well pleased to press that path, so clean, so pure,
To seem in danger, yet to feel secure;
Trifling with terror, while they strive to shun
The curling billows; laughing as they run;
They know the neck that joins the shore and sea,
Or, ah! how changed that fearless laugh would be.

Observe how various Parties take their way,
By sea-side walks, or make the sand-hills gay;
There group'd are laughing maids and sighing swains
And some apart who feel unpitied pains;
Pains from diseases, pains which those who feel,
To the physician not the fair, reveal;
For nymphs (propitious to the lover's sigh)
Leave these poor patients to complain and die.

Lo! where on that huge anchor sadly leans
That sick tall figure, lost in other scenes;
He late from India's clime impatient sail'd
There, as his fortune grew, his spirits fail'd;
For each delight, in search of wealth he went,
For ease alone, the wealth acquired is spent—
And spent in vain: enrich'd, aggrieved, he sees
The envied poor possess'd of joy and ease:
And now he flies from place to place, to gain
Strength for enjoyment, and still flies in vain:
Mark! with what sadness, of that pleasant crew,
Boist'rous in mirth, he takes a transient view;
And fixing then his eye upon the sea,
Thinks what has been and what must shortly be:
Is it not strange that man should health destroy,
For joys that come when he is dead to joy?

Now is it pleasant in the Summer-eve,
When a broad shore retiring waters leave,
Awhile to wait upon the firm fair sand,
When all is calm at sea, and still at land;

And there the ocean's produce to explore,
As floating by, or rolling on the shore;
Those living jellies which the flesh inflame,
Fierce as a nettle, and from that its name;
Some in huge masses, some that you may bring
In the small compass of a lady's ring:
Figured by hand divine—there's not a gem
Wrought by man's art to be compared to them;
Soft, brilliant, tender, through the wave they glow,
And make the moonbeam brighter where they flow
Involved in sea-wrack, here you find a race,
Which science doubting, knows not where to place,
On shell or stone is dropped the embryo-seed,
And quickly vegetates a vital breed.

While thus with pleasing wonder you inspect
Treasures the vulgar in their scorn reject,
See as they float along the entangled weeds
Slowly approach, upborne on bladdery beads;
Wait till they land, and you shall then behold
The fiery sparks those tangled fronds unfold,
Myriads of living points: the unaided eye
Can but the fire and not the form descry.
And now our view upon the ocean turn
And there the splendour of the waves discern;
Cast but a stone, or strike them with an oar,
And you shall flames within the deep explore;
Or scoop the stream phosphoric as you stand,
And the cold flames shall flash along your hand;
When lost in wonder, you shall walk and gaze
On weeds that sparkle, and on waves that blaze.

The ocean too has Winter-views serene,
When all you see through dens'est fog is seen;
When you can hear the fishers near at hand
Distinctly speak, yet see not where they stand;
Or sometimes them and not their boat discern,
Or half-conceal'd some figure at the stern;
The view's all bounded, and from side to side
Your utmost prospect but a few ells wide;
Boys who, on shore to see the pebble cast,
Will hear it strike against the viewless mast:
While the stern boatman growls his fierce disdain
At whom he knows not, whom he threats in vain.

'Tis pleasant then to view the nets float past,
Net after net till you have seen the last;
And as you wait till all beyond you slip,
A boat comes gliding from an anchor'd ship,
Breaking the silence with the dipping oar,
And their own tones as labouring for the shore;

Those measured tones which with the scene agree,
And give a sadness to serenity.
All scenes like these the tender Maid should shun,
Nor to a misty beach in autumn run:
Much should she guard against the evening cold,
And her slight shape with fleecy warmth infold;
This she admits, but not with so much ease
Gives up the night-walk when th' attendants please:
Her have I seen, pale, vapour'd through the day
With crowded parties at the midnight play:
Faint in the morn, no powers could she exert;
At night with Pam delighted and alert:
In a small shop she's ruffled with a crowd,
Breath'd the thick air, and cough'd and laugh'd aloud:
She who will tremble if her eye explore
"The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor;"
Whom the kind doctor charged with shaking head,
At early hour to quit the beaux for bed;
She has, contemning fear, gone down the dance
Till she perceived the rosy morn advance;
Then has she wonder'd, fainting o'er her tea,
Her drops and julep should so useless be:
Ah! sure her joys must ravish every sense,
Who buys a portion at such vast expense.
Among those joys, 'tis one at eve to sail
On the broad river with a favourite gale:
When no rough waves upon the bosom ride,
But the keel cuts, nor rises on the tide;
Safe from the stream the nearer gunwale stands,
Where playful children trail their idle hands:
Or strive to catch long grassy leaves that float
On either side of the impeded boat:
What time the moon arising shows the mud,
A shining border to the silver flood.
When, by her dubious light, the meanest views,
Chalk, stones, and stakes, obtain the richest hues
And when the cattle, as they gazing stand,
Seem nobler objects than when view'd from land:
Then anchor'd vessels in the way appear,
And sea-boys greet them as they pass—"What cheer?"
The sleeping shell-ducks at the sound arise,
And utter loud their unharmonious cries:
Fluttering they move their weedy beds among,
Or instant diving, hide their plumeless young.
Along the Wall, returning from the town,
The weary rustic homeward wanders down;
Who stops and gazes at such joyous crew,
And feels his envy rising at the view;

the true light speech and laugh indignant hears,
And feels more press'd by want, more vex'd by fears.
Ah! go in peace, good fellow, to thine home,
Nor fancy these escape the general doom;
Gay as they seem, be sure with them are hearts
With sorrow tried: there's sadness in their parts:
If thou couldst see them when they think alone,
Mirth, music, friends, and these amusements gone;
Couldst thou discover every secret ill
That pains their spirit, or resists their will;
Couldst thou behold forsaken Love's distress
Or Envy's pang at glory and success,
Or Beauty conscious of the spoils of Time,
Or Guilt alarm'd when Memory shows the crime;
All that gives sorrow, terror, grief, and gloom;
Content would cheer thee trudging to thine home.
There are, 'tis true, who lay their cares aside,
And bid some hours in calm enjoyment glide;
Perchance some fair-one to the sober night
Adds (by the sweetness of her song) delight;
And as the music on the water floats,
Some bolder shore returns the soften'd notes,
Then, youth, beware, for all around conspire
To banish caution and to wake desire:
The day's amusement, feasting, beauty, wine,
These accents sweet and this soft hour combine,
When most unguarded, then to win that heart of thine:
But see, they land! the fond enchantment flies,
And in its place life's common views arise.
Sometimes a Party row'd from town, will land
On a small islet form'd of shelly sand,
Left by the water when the tides are low,
But which the floods in their return o'erflow:
There will they anchor, pleased awhile to view
The watery waste, a prospect wild and new;
The now receding billows gave them space,
On either side the growing shores to pace;
And then returning, they contract the scene,
Till small and smaller grows the walk between;
As sea to sea approaches, shore to shores,
Till the next ebb the sandy isle restores.
Then what alarm! what danger and dismay,
If all their trust, their boat should drift away:
And once it happen'd—Gay the friends advanced,
They walk'd, they ran, they play'd, they sang, they
danced;
The urns were boiling, and the cups went round,
And not a grave or thoughtful face was found

On the bright sand they trod with nimble feet,
Dry shelly sand that made the summer-seat;
The wondering mews flew fluttering o'er the head
And waves ran softly up their shining bed.
Some form'd a party from the rest to stray,
Pleased to collect the trifles in their way;
These to behold they call their friends around,
No friends can hear, or hear another sound,
Alarm'd, they hasten, yet perceive not why,
But catch the fear that quickens as they fly.
For lo! a lady sage, who paced the sand
With her fair children, one in either hand,
Intent on home, had turn'd, and saw the boat
Slipp'd from her moorings, and now far afloat;
She gazed, she trembled, and though faint her call,
It seem'd, like thunder, to confound them all.
Their sailor-guides, the boatman and his mate,
Had drank, and slept regardless of their state;
"Awake," they cried aloud! "Alarm the shore!
Shout all, or never shall we reach it more!"
Alas! no shout the distant land can reach,
Nor eye behold them from the foggy beach:
Again they join in one loud powerful cry,
Then cease, and eager listen for reply;
None came—the rising wind blew sadly by:
They shout once more, and then they turn aside,
To see how quickly flow'd the coming tide;
Between each cry they find the waters steal
On their strange prison, and new horrors feel;
Foot after foot on the contracted ground
The billows fall, and dreadful is the sound;
Less and yet less the sinking isle became,
And there was wailing, weeping, wrath, and blame.
Had one been there, with spirit strong and high
Who could observe, as he prepared to die,
He might have seen of hearts the varying kind,
And traced the movement of each different mind
He might have seen, that not the gentle maid
Was more than stern and haughty man afraid;
Such, calmly grieving, will their fears suppress,
And silent prayers to Mercy's throne address;
While fiercer minds, impatient, angry, loud,
Force their vain grief on the reluctant crowd:
The party's patron, sorely sighing, cried,
'Why should you urge me? I at first denied."
Fiercely they answer'd, "Why will you comp'lain
Who saw no danger, or was warn'd in vain?"

A few essay'd the troubled soul to calm.
But dread prevail'd, and anguish and alarm.
Now rose the water through the lessening sand,
And they seem'd sinking while they yet could stand
The sun went down, they look'd from side to side,
Nor aught except the gathering sea descried;
Dark and more dark, more wet, more cold it grew,
And the most lively hade to hope adieu;
Children, by love then lifted from the seas,
Felt not the waters at the parents' knees,
But wept aloud; the wind increased the sound,
And the cold billows as they broke around.
"Once more, yet once again, with all our strength,
Cry to the land—we may be heard at length."
Vain hope if yet unseen! but hark! an oar,
That sound of bliss! comes dashing to their shore;
Still, still the water rises, "Haste!" they cry,
"Oh! hurry, seamen; in delay we die:"
(Seamen were these, who in their ship perceived
The drifted boat, and thus her crew relieved.)
And now the keel just cuts the cover'd sand,
Now to the gunwale stretches every hand:
With trembling pleasure all confused embark,
And kiss the tackling of their welcome ark;
While the most giddy, as they reach the shore,
Think of their danger and their GOD adore.

LETTER X.

CLUBS AND SOCIAL MEETINGS.

Desire of Country Gentlemen for Town Associations—Book-clubs—Too much of Literary Character expected from them—Literary Conversation prevented: by Feasting: by Cards—Good, notwithstanding, results—Card-club with Eagerness resorted to—Players—Umpires at the Whist Table—Petulances of Temper there discovered—Free-and-easy Club: not perfectly easy or free—Freedom, how interrupted—The superior Member—Termination of the Evening—Drinking and Smoking Clubs—The Midnight Conversation of the delaying Members—Society of the Poorer Inhabitants: its Users gives Pride and Consequence to the humble Character—Pleasant Habitations of the frugal Poor—Sailor returning to his Family—Freemasons' Club—The Mystery—What its Origin—Its professed Advantages—Griggs and Gregorians—A Kind of Masons—Reflections on these various Societies.

You say you envy in your calm retreat
Our social Meetings;—'tis with joy we meet:
In these our parties you are pleased to find
Good sense and wit, with intercourse of mind;
Composed of men, who read, reflect, and write,
Who, when they meet, must yield and share delight:
To you our Book-club has peculiar charm,
For which you sicken in your quiet farm:
Here you suppose us at our leisure placed,
Enjoying freedom, and displaying taste:
With wisdom cheerful, temperately gay,
Pleased to enjoy, and willing to display.
If thus your envy gives your ease its gloom,
Give wings to fancy, and among us come.
We're now assembled; you may soon attend—
I'll introduce you—"Gentlemen, my friend."
"Now are you happy? you have pass'd a night
In gay discourse, and rational delight."
"Alas! not so: for how can mortals think,
Or thoughts exchange, if thus they eat and drink?
No! I confess, when we had fairly dined,
That was no time for intercourse of mind;
There was each dish prepared with skill t' invite
And to detain the struggling appetite;
On such occasions minds with one consent
Are to the comforts of the body lent:

There was no pause—the wine went quickly round.
Till struggling Fancy was by Bacchus bound;
Wine is to wit as water thrown on fire,
By duly sprinkling both are raised the higher:
Thus largely dealt, the vivid blaze they choke,
And all the genial flame goes off in smoke.'

"But when no more your boards these loads contain,
When wine no more o'erwhelms the labouring brain,
But serves, a gentle stimulus: we know
How wit must sparkle, and how fancy flow."

It might be so, but no such club days come;
We always find these dampers in the room:
If to converse were all that brought us here,
A few odd members would in turn appear;
Who dwelling nigh, would saunter in and out,
Overlook the list, and toss the books about;
Or yawning read them, walking up and down,
Just as the loungers in the shops in town;
Till fancying nothing would their minds amuse,
They'd push them by, and go in search of news.

But our attractions are a stronger sort,
The earliest dainties and the oldest port:
All enter them with glee in every look
And not a member thinks about a book.

Still, let me own, there are some vacant hours,
When minds might work, and men exert their powers
Ere wine to folly spurs the giddy guest,
But gives to wit its vigour and its zest;
Then might we reason, might in turn display
Our several talents, and be wisely gay;
We might—but who a tame discourse regards,
When Whist is named, and we behold the Cards?

We from that time are neither grave nor gay;
Our thought, our care, our business is to play:
Fix'd on these spots and figures, each attends
Much to his partners, nothing to his friends.
Our public cares, the long, the warm debate,
That kept our patriots from their beds so late;
War, peace, invasion, all we hope or dread,
Vanish like dreams when men forsake their bed;
And groaning nations and contending kings
Are all forgotten for these painted things:
Paper and paste, vile figures and poor spots,
Level all minds, philosophers and sots:
And give an equal spirit, pause, and force,
Join'd with peculiar diction, to discourse:
"Who deals?—you led—we're three by cards—had you
Honour in hand?"—"Upon my honour two."

Hour after hour, men thus contending sit,
Grave without sense, and pointed without wit.
Thus it appears these envied Clubs possess
No certain means of social happiness;
Yet there's a good that flows from scenes like these—
Man meets with man at leisure and at ease;
We to our neighbours and our equals come,
And rub off pride that man contracts at home;
For there, admitted master, he is prone
To claim attention and to talk alone:
But here he meets with neither son nor spouse;
No humble cousin to his bidding bows;
To his raised voice his neighbours' voices rise,
To his high look as lofty look replies;
When much he speaks, he finds that ears are closed,
And certain signs inform him when he's prosed;
Here all the value of a listener know,
And claim, in turn, the favour they bestow.
No pleasure gives the speech, when all would speak
And all in vain a civil hearer seek.
To chance alone we owe the free discourse,
In vain you purpose what you cannot force;
'T is when the favourite themes unbidden spring,
That fancy soars with such unwearied wing;
Then may you call in aid the moderate glass,
But let it slowly and unprompted pass;
So shall there all things for the end unite,
And give that hour of rational delight.
Men to their Clubs repair, themselves to please,
To care for nothing, and to take their ease;
In fact, for play, for wine, for news they come:
Discourse is shared with friends or found at home.

But Cards with Books are incidental things;
We've nights devoted to these queens and kings:
Then if we choose the social game, we may;
Now 'tis a duty, and we're bound to play;
Nor ever meeting of the social kind
Was more engaging, yet had less of mind.
Our eager parties, when the lunar light
Throws its full radiance on the festive night,
Of either sex, with punctual hurry come,
And fill, with one accord, an ample room,
Pleased, the fresh packs on cloth of green they see,
And seizing, handle with preluding glee;
They draw, they sit, they shuffle, cut and deal;
Like friends assembled, but like foes to feel:

But yet not all,—a happier few have joys
Of mere amusement, and their cards are toys;
No skill nor art, nor fretful hopes have they,
But while their friends are gaming, laugh and play
Others there are, the veterans of the game,
Who owe their pleasure to their envied fame;
Through many a year, with hard-contested strife,
Have they attain'd this glory of their life:
Such is that ancient burgess, whom in vain
Would gout and fever on his couch detain:
And that large lady, who resolves to come,
Though a first fit has warn'd her of her doom!
These are as oracles: in every cause
They settle doubts, and their decrees are laws,
But all are troubled, when, with dubious look,
Diana questions what Apollo spoke.
Here avarice first, the keen desire of gain,
Rules in each heart, and works in every brain;
Alike the veteran-dames and virgins feel,
Nor care what grey beards or what striplings deal;
Sex, age, and station, vanish from their view,
And gold, their sovereign good, the mingled crowd pursues
Hence they are jealous, and as rivals keep
A watchful eye on the beloved heap;
Meantime discretion bids the tongue be still,
And mild good-humour strives with strong ill-will,
Till prudence fails; when, all impatient grown,
They make their grief, by their suspicions, known.
"Sir, I protest, were Job himself at play,
He'd rave to see you throw your cards away.
Not that I care a button—not a pin
For what I lose: but we had cards to win
A saint in heaven would grieve too see such a hunt
Cut up by one who will not understand."
"Complain of me! and so you might indeed,
If I had ventured on that foolish lead.
That fatal heart—but I forgot your play—
Some folk have ever thrown their hearts away."
"Yes, and their diamonds. I have heard of one
Who made a beggar of an only son."
"Better a beggar, than to see him tied
To art and spite, to insolence and pride."
"Sir, were I you, I'd strive to be polite,
Against my nature, for a single night."
"So did you strive, and, madam! with success
I knew no being we could censure less!"
Is this too much? alas! my peaceful muse
Cannot with half their virulence abuse

And hark! at other tables discord reigns,
With feign'd contempt for losses and for gains;
Passions awhile are bridled; then they rage,
In waspish youth, and in resentful age;
With scraps of insult—"Sir, when next you play
Reflect whose money 't is you throw away.
No one on earth can less such things regard,
But when one's partner doesn't know a card—
I scorn suspicion, ma am, but while you stand
Behind that lady, pray keep down your hand."
"Good heav'n, revoke! remember, if the set
Be lost, in honour you should pay the debt."
"There, there's your money: but, while I have life
I'll never more sit down with man and wife;
They snap and snarl indeed, but in the heat
Of all their spleen, their understandings meet
They are Freemasons, and have many a sign,
That we, poor devils! never can divine:
May it be told, do ye divide th' amount,
Or goes it all to family account?"

Next is the club, where to their friends in town,
Our country neighbours once a month come down;
We term it *Free-and-Easy*, and yet we
Find it no easy matter to be free:
Ev'n in our small assembly, friends among,
Are minds perverse, there's something will be wrong.
Men are not equal; some will claim a right
To be the kings and heroes of the night;
Will their own favourite themes and notions start,
And you must hear, offend them, or depart.
There comes Sir Thomas from his village seat,
Happy, he tells us, all his friends to meet;
He brings the ruin'd brother of his wife,
Whom he supports, and makes him sick of life;
A ready witness whom he can produce
Of all his deeds—a butt for his abuse:
Soon as he enters, has the guests espied,
Drawn to the fire, and to the glass applied—
"Well, what's the subject?—what are you about?
The news, I take it—come I'll help you out;"
And then, without one answer he bestows
Freely upon us all he hears and knows;
Gives us opinions, tells us how he votes,
Recites the speeches, adds them to his notes,
And gives old ill-told tales for new-born anecdotes:
Yet cares he nothing what we judge or think,
Our only duty's to attend and drink

At length, admonish'd by his gout he ends
The various speech, and leaves at peace his friends.
But now alas! we've lost the pleasant hour,
And wisdom flies from wine's superior power.
Wine, like the rising sun, possession gains,
And drives the mist of dullness from the brains;
The gloomy vapour from the spirit flies,
And views of gaiety and gladness rise;
Still it proceeds; till from the glowing heat,
The prudent calmly to their shades retreat:—
Then is the mind o'ercast—in wordy rage
And loud contention angry men engage;
Then spleen and pique, like fireworks thrown in spite
To mischief turn the pleasures of the night;
Anger abuses, Malice loudly rails,
Revenge awakes, and Anarchy prevails:
Till wine, that raised the tempest, makes it cease,
And mandlin Love insists on instant peace;
He, noisy mirth and roaring song commands
Gives idle toasts, and joins unfriendly hands:
Till fuddled Friendship vows esteem and weeps,
And jovial Folly drinks and sings and sleeps.

A Club there is of *Smokers*—Dare you come
To that close, clouded, hot, narcotic room?
When, midnight past, the very candles seem
Dying for air, and give a ghastly gleam:
When curling fumes in lazy wreaths arise,
And prosing topers rub their winking eyes;
When the long tale, renew'd when last they met,
Is spliced anew, and is unfinish'd yet:
When but a few are left the house to tire,
And they half-sleeping by the sleepy fire:
Ev'n the poor ventilating vane that flew
Of late so fast, is now grown drowsy too:
When sweet, cold, clammy punch its aid bestows,
Then thus the midnight conversation flows.—
"Then, as I said, and—mind me—as I say,
At our last meeting—you remember"—"Ah?"
"Well, very well—then freely as I drink
I spoke my thought—you take me—what I think:
And, sir, said I, if I a freeman be,
It is my bounden duty to be free."
"Ay, there you posed him: I respect the Chair,
But man is man, although the man's a mayor;
If Muggins live—no, no!—if Muggins die,
He'll quit his office—neighbour, shall I try?"

"I'll speak my mind, for here are none but friends:
They're all contending for their private ends;
No public spirit—once a vote would bring,
I say a vote—was then a pretty thing;
It made a man to serve his country and his king:
But for that place, that Muggins must resign,
You've my advice—'t is no affair of mine."

The Poor Man has his Club; he comes and spends
His hoarded pittance with his chosen friends;
Nor this alone,—a monthly dole he pays,
To be assisted when his health decays;
Some part his prudence from the day's supply,
For cares and troubles in his age, lays by:
The printed rules he guards with painted frame,
And shows his children where to read his name:
These simple words his honest nature move,
That bond of union tied by laws of love;
This is his pride, it gives to his employ
New value, to his home another joy;
While a religious hope its balm applies
For all his fate inflicts, and all his state denies.
Much would it please you, sometimes to explore
The peaceful dwellings of our Borough poor;
To view a sailor just return'd from sea,
His wife beside: a child on either knee,
And others crowding near, that none may lose
The smallest portion of the welcome news;
What dangers pass'd, "when seas ran mountains high
When tempests raved, and horrors veil'd the sky;
When prudence fail'd, when courage grew dismay'd
When the strong fainted, and the wicked pray'd,—
Then in the yawning gulf far down we drove,
And gazed upon the billowy mount above;
Till up that mountain, swinging with the gale,
We view'd the horrors of the watery vale."
The trembling children look with stedfast eyes,
And, panting, sob involuntary sighs:
Soft sleep awhile his torpid touch delays,
And all is joy and piety and praise.

Masons are ours, *Freemasons*—but, alas!
To their own bards I leave the mystic class:
In vain shall one, and not a gifted man,
Attempt to sing of this enlighten'd clan:
I know no Word, boast no directing Sign,
And not one Token of the race is mine;

Whether with Hiram, that wise widow's son,
They came from Tyre to royal Solomon,
Two pillars raising by their skill profound,
Boaz and Jachin through the East renown'd:
Whether the sacred Books their rise express,
Or books profane, 'tis vain for me to guess:
It may be, lost in date remote and high,
They know not what their own antiquity:
It may be, too, derived from cause so low,
They have no wish their origin to show:
If, as Crusaders, they combined to wrest
From heathen lords the land they long possess'd;
Or were at first some harmless club, who made
Their idle meetings solemn by parade;
Is but conjecture—for the task unfit,
Awe-struck and mute, the puzzling theme I quit:
Yet, if such blessings from their Order flow,
We should be glad their moral code to know:
Trowels of silver are but simple things,
And Aprons worthless as their apron-strings;
But if indeed you have the skill to teach
A social spirit, now beyond our reach:
If man's warm passions you can guide and bind,
And plant the virtues in the wayward mind:
If you can wake to Christian love the heart,—
In mercy, something of your powers impart.
But, as it seems, we Masons must become
To know the Secret, and must then be dumb;
And as we venture for uncertain gains,
Perhaps the profit is not worth the pains.
When Bruce, that dauntless traveller, thought he stood
On Nile's first rise, the fountain of the flood,
And drank exulting in the sacred spring,
The critics told him it was no such thing:
That springs unnumber'd round the country ran,
But none could show him where the first began:
So might we feel, should we our time bestow,
To gain these Secrets and these Signs to know;
Might question still if all the truth we found,
And firmly stood upon the certain ground;
We might our title to the Mystery dread,
And fear we drank not at the river-head.

Griggs and *Gregorians* here their meeting hold,
Convivial sects, and *Bucks* alert and bold;
A kind of Masons, but without their sign:
The bonds of union—pleasure, song, and wine

Man, a gregarious creature, loves to fly
Where he the trackings of the herd can spy;
Still to be one with many he desires,
Although it leads him through the thorns and briers.
A few! but few there are, who in the mind
Perpetual source of consolation find;
The weaker many to the world will come,
For comforts seldom to be found from home.
When the faint hands no more a brimmer hold,
When flannel-wreaths the useless limbs infold,
The breath impeded, and the bosom cold;
When half the pillow'd man the palsy chains,
And the blood falters in the bloated veins,—
Then, as our friends no further aid supply
Than hope's cold phrase and courtesy's soft sigh,
We should that comfort for ourselves ensure,
Which friends could not, if we could friends, procure.
Early in life, when we can laugh aloud,
There's something pleasant in a social crowd,
Who laugh with us—but will such joy remain,
When we lie struggling on the bed of pain?
When our physician tells us with a sigh,
No more on hope and science to rely,
Life's staff is useless then; with labouring breath
We pray for Hope divine—the staff of Death;—
This is a scene which few companions grace,
And where the heart's first favourites yield their place.
Here all the aid of man to man must end,
Here mounts the soul to her eternal Friend;
The tenderest love must here its ties resign,
And give th' aspiring heart to love divine.
Men feel their weakness, and to numbers run,
Themselves to strengthen, or themselves to shun;
But though to this our weakness may be prone,
Let's learn to live for we must die, alone.

LETTER XI.

INNS.

A difficult Subject for Poetry—Invocation of the Muse—Description of the principal Inn and those of the first Class—The large deserted Tavern—Those of a second Order—Their Company—One of particular Description—A lower Kind of Public-Houses: yet distinguished among themselves—Houses on the Quays for Sailors—The Green-Man: its Landlord, and the Adventure of his Marriage, &c.

MUCH do I need, and therefore will I ask,
A Muse to aid me in my present task;
For them with special cause we beg for aid,
When of our subject we are most afraid:
INNS are this subject—'tis an ill-drawn lot,
So, thou who gravely trillest, fail me not:
Fail not, but haste, and to my memory bring
Scenes yet unsung, which few would choose to sing:
Thou mad'st a Shilling splendid; thou hast thrown
On humble themes the graces all thine own;
By thee the Mistress of a Village-school
Became a queen enthroned upon her stool:
And far beyond the rest thou gav'st to shine
Belinda's Lock—that deathless work was thine.
Come, lend thy cheerful light, and give to please
These seats of revelry, these scenes of ease
Who sings of Inns much danger has to dread,
And needs assistance from the fountain-head.
High in the street, o'erlooking all the place,
The rampant *Lion* shows his kingly face;
His ample jaws extend from side to side,
His eyes are glaring, and his nostrils wide:
In silver shag the sovereign form is dress'd,
A mane horrific sweeps his ample chest;
Elate with pride, he seems t' assert his reign
And stands the glory of his wide domain.
Yet nothing dreadful to his friends the sight,
But sign and pledge of welcome and delight;
To him the noblest guest the town detains
Flies for repast, and in his court remains;
Him too the crowd with longing looks admire,
Sigh for his joys and modestly retire;
Here not a comfort shall to them be lost
Who never ask or never feel the cost.

The ample yards on either side contain
Buildings where order and distinction reign;
The splendid carriage of the wealthier guest,
The ready chaise and driver smartly dress'd;
Whiskeys and gigs and curricles are there,
And high-fed prancers many a raw-boned pair.
On all without a lordly host sustains
The care of empire, and observant reigns;
The parting guest beholds him at his side,
With pomp obsequious, bending in his pride;
Round all the place his eyes all objects meet,
Attentive, silent, civil, and discreet.
O'er all within the lady-hostess rules,
Her bar she governs, and her kitchen schools;
To every guest th' appropriate speech is made,
And every duty with distinction paid:
Respectful, easy, pleasant, or polite—
"Your honour's servant"—"Mister Smith, good night."

Next, but not near, yet honour'd through the town,
There swing, incongruous pair! the Bear and Crown?
That Crown suspended gems and ribands deck,
A golden chain hangs o'er that furry neck:
Unlike the nobler beast, the Bear is bound,
And with the Crown so near him, scowls uncrown'd;
Less his dominion, but alert are all
Without, within, and ready for the call;
Smart lads and light run nimbly here and there,
Nor for neglected duties mourns the Bear.

To his retreats, on the Election-day,
The losing party found their silent way;
There they partook of each consoling good,
Like him uncrown'd, like him in sullen mood—
Threat'ning, but bound.—Here meet a social kind,
Our various clubs for various cause combined;
Nor has he pride, but thankful takes as gain
The dew-drops shaken from the Lion's mane:
A thriving couple here their skill display,
And share the profits of no vulgar sway.
Third in our Borough's list appears the sign
Of a fair queen—the gracious Caroline;
But in decay—each feature in the face
Has stain of Time, and token of disgrace.
The storm of winter, and the summer-sun,
Have on that form their equal mischief done;
The features now are all disfigured seen,
And not one charm adorns th' insulted queen.
To this poor face was never paint applied,
Th' unseemly work of cruel Time to hide;

Here we may rightly such neglect upbraid.
Paint on such faces is by prudence laid.
Large the domain, but all within combine
To correspond with the dishonour'd sign;
And all around dilapidates; you call—
But none replies—they're inattentive all:
At length a ruin'd stable holds your steed,
While you through large and dirty rooms proceed,
Spacious and cold: a proof they once had been
In honour,—now magnificently mean;
Till in some small half-furnish'd room you rest,
Whose dying fire denotes it had a guest.
In those you pass'd where former splendour reigned,
You saw the carpets torn, the paper stain'd:
Squares of discordant glass in windows fix'd,
And paper oil'd in many a space betwixt;
A soil'd and broken sconce, a mirror crack'd,
With table underpropp'd, and chairs new back'd;
A marble side-slab with ten thousand stains,
And all an ancient Tavern's poor remains.

With much entreaty, they your food prepare,
And acid wine afford, with meagre fare;
Heartless you sup: and when a dozen times
You've read the fractured window's senseless rhymes
Have been assured that Phœbe Green was fair,
And Peter Jackson took his supper there;
You reach a chilling chamber, where you dread
Damps, hot or cold, from a tremendous bed;
Late comes your sleep, and you are waken'd soon
By rustling tatters of the old festoon.

O'er this large building, thus by time defaced,
A servile couple has its owner placed,
Who not unmindful that its style is large
To lost magnificence adapt their charge:
Thus an old beauty, who has long declined,
Keeps former dues and dignity in mind:
And wills that all attention should be paid
For graces vanish'd, and for charms decay'd.

Few years have pass'd, since brightly 'cross the way
Lights from each window shot the lengthen'd ray,
And busy looks in every face were seen,
Through the warm precincts of the reigning Queen:
There fires inviting blazed, and all around
Was heard the tinkling bells' seducing sound;
The nimble waiters to that sound from far
Sprang to the call, then hasten'd to the bar;
Where a grand priestess of the temple sway'd
The most obedient, and the most obey'd;

Rosy and round, adorn'd in crimson vest,
And flaming ribands at her ample breast:
She, skill'd like Circe, tried her guests to move,
With looks of welcome and with words of love
And such her potent charms, that men unwise
Were soon transform'd and fitted for the sties.
Her port in bottles stood, a well-stain'd row
Drawn for the evening from the pipe below;
Three powerful spirits fill'd a parted case,
Some cordial bottles stood in secret place;
Fair acid-fruits in nets above were seen,
Her plate was splendid, and her glasses clean;
Basins and bowls were ready on the stand,
And measures clatter'd in her powerful hand.
Inferior Houses now our notice claim,
But who shall deal them their appropriate fame?
Who shall the nice, yet known distinction, tell,
Between the peal complete and single Bell?
Determine ye, who on your shining nags
Wear oil-skin beavers, and bear seal-skin bags;
Or ye, grave topers, who with coy delight
Snugly enjoy the sweetness of the night;
Ye Travellers all, superior Inns denied
By moderate purse, the low by decent pride;
Come and determine,—will ye take your place
At the *full* Orb, or *half* the lunar Face?
With the Black Boy or Angel will ye dine?
Will ye approve the Fountain or the Vine?
Horses, the *white* or *black* will ye prefer?
The Silver-Swan or Swan opposed to her—
Rare bird! whose form the raven-plumage decks,
And graceful curve her three alluring necks?
All these a decent entertainment give.
And by their comforts comfortably live.
Shall I pass by the Boar?—there are who cry
"Beware the Boar," and pass determined by:
Those dreadful tusks, those little peering eyes
And churning chaps, are tokens to the wise.
There dwells a kind old Aunt, and there you see
Some kind young Nieces in her company:
Poor village nieces, whom the tender dame
Invites to town, and gives their beauty Fame;
The grateful sisters feel th' important aid,
And the good Aunt is flatter'd and repaid.
What, though it may some cool observers strike,
That such fair sisters should be so unlike:
That still another and another comes
And at the matron's tables smiles and blooms;

That all appear as if they meant to stay
Time undefined, nor name a parting day;
And yet, though all are valued, all are dear
Causeless they go, and seldom more appear.
Yet let Suspicion hide her odious head,
And Scandal vengeance from a burgess dread:
A pious friend, who with the ancient dame
At sober cribbage takes an evening game;
His cup beside him, through their play he quaffs,
And oft renews, and innocently laughs;
Or, growing serious, to the text resorts,
And from the Sunday-sermon makes reports,
While all, with grateful glee, his wish attend,
A grave protector and a powerful friend:
But Slander says, who indistinctly sees,
Once he was caught with Sulvia on his knees —
A cautious burgess with a careful wife
To be so caught!—'tis false upon my life.
Next are a lower kind, yet not so low
But they, among them, their distinctions know,
And when a thriving landlord aims so high,
As to exchange the Chequer for the Pye,
Or from Duke William to the Dog repairs,
He takes a finer coat and fiercer airs.
Pleased with his power, the poor man loves to say
What favourite Inn shall share his evening's pay;
Where he shall sit the social hour, and lose
His past day's labours and his next day's views.
Our Seamen too have choice: one takes a trip
In the warm cabin of his favourite Ship;
And on the morrow in the humbler Boat
He rows till fancy feels herself afloat;
Can he the sign—Three Jolly Sailors—pass,
Who hears a fiddle and who sees a lass?
The Anchor too affords the seaman joys,
In small smoked room, all clamour, crowd, and noise;
Where a curved settle half surrounds the fire,
Where fifty voices purl and punch require;
They come for pleasure in their leisure hour,
And they enjoy it to their utmost power;
Standing they drink, they swearing smoke, while all
Call or make ready for a second call:
There is no time for trifling—"Do ye see?
"We drink and drub the French extempore."
See! round the room, on every beam and balk,
Are mingled scrolls of hieroglyphic chalk;
Yet nothing heeded—would one stroke suffice
To blot out all, here honour is too nice,—

"Let knavish Inn-keepers think such dirty things,
We're British tars, and British tars are kings."
But the Green-Man shall I pass by musing,
Which mine own *James* upon his sign-post hung?
His sign, his image,—for he was once seen
A squire's attendant, clad in keeper's green;
Ere yet with wages more, and honour less,
He stood behind me in a graver dress.
James in an evil hour went forth to woo
Young *Juliet Hart*, and was her Romeo:
They'd seen the play, and thought it vastly sweet
For two young lovers by the moon to meet:
The nymph was gentle, of her favours free,
Ev'n at a word—no Rosalind was she;
Nor, like that other Juliet, tried his truth
With—"Be thy purpose marriage, gentle youth?"
But him received, and heard his tender tale
When sang the lark, and with the nightingale:
So in few months the generous lass was seen
I' the way that all the Capulets had been.
The first repentance seized the amorous man
And—shame on love!—he reason'd and he ran;
The thoughtful Romeo trembled for his purse,
And the sad sounds, "for better and for worse."
Yet could the Lover not so far withdraw,
But he was haunted both by Love and Law.
Now Law dismay'd him as he view'd its fangs,
Now Pity seized him for his Juliet's pangs:
Then thoughts of justice and some dread of jail,
Where all would blame him, and where none might bail
These drew him back, till Juliet's hut appear'd
Where love had drawn him when he should have fear'd.
There sat the father in his wicker throne,
Uttering his curses in tremendous tone:
With foulest names his daughter he reviled,
And look'd a very Herod at the child:
Nor was she patient, but with equal scorn,
Bade him remember when his Joe was born:
Then rose the mother, eager to begin
Her plea for frailty, when the swain came in.
To him she turned, and other theme began,
Show'd him his boy, and bade him be a man;
"An honest man, who, when he breaks the laws,
Will make a woman honest if there's cause."
With lengthen'd speech she proved what came to pass,
Was no reflection on a loving lass:
"If she your love as wife and mother claim,
What can it matter which was first the name?

But 't is most base, 't is perjury and theft,
When a lost girl is like a widow left;
The rogue who ruins—" here the father found
His spouse was treading on forbidden ground.
"That's not the point," quoth he,—"I don't suppose
My good friend Fletcher to be one of those;
What's d me amiss he'll mend in proper time—
I hate to hear of villany and crime:
'T was my misfortune, in the days of youth
To find two lasses pleading for my truth;
The case was hard, I would with all my soul
Have wedded both, but law is our control;
So one I took, and when we gain'd a home,
Her friend agreed—what could she more?—to come;
And when she found that I'd a widow'd bed,
Me she desired—what could I less?—to wed.
An easier case is yours: you've not the smart
That two fond pleaders cause in one man's heart,
You've not to wait from year to year distress'd,
Before your conscience can be laid to rest;
There smiles your bride, there sprawls your new-born
—A ring, a licence, and the thing is done." [son,
"My loving James," the lass began her plea.
"I'll make thy reason take a part with me:
Had I been froward, skittish, or unkind,
Or to thy person or thy passion blind;
Had I refused, when 't was thy part to pray,
Or put thee off with promise and delay;
Thou might'st in justice and in conscience fly.
Denying her who taught thee to deny;
But, James, with me thou hadst an easier task,
Bonds and conditions I forbore to ask;
I laid no traps for thee, no plots or plans,
Nor marriage named by licence or by banns;
Nor would I now the parson's aid employ,
But for this cause,"—and up she held her boy.
Motives like these could heart or flesh resist?
James took the infant and in triumph kiss'd;
Then to his mother's arms the child restored,
Made his proud speech and pledged his worthy word.
"Three times at church our banns shall publish'd be,
Thy health be drunk in bumpers three times three;
And thou shalt grace (bedeck'd in garments gay)
The christening-dinner on the wedding day."
James at my door then made his parting bow,
Took the Green-Man, and is a master now.

LETTER XII.

PLAYERS.

They arrive in the Borough—Welcomed by their former Friends—Are better fitted for Comic than Tragic Scenes: yet better approved in the latter by one Part of their Audience—Their general Character and Pleasantry—Particular Distresses and Labours—Their Fortitude and Patience—A private Rehearsal—The Vanity of an aged Actress—A Heroine from the Milliner's Shop—A deluded Tradesman—Of what Persons the Company is composed—Character and Adventures of Frederic Thompson.

DRAWN by the annual call, we now behold
Our Troop Dramatic, heroes known of old,
And those, since last they march'd, enlisted and caroll'd:
Mounted on hacks or in waggons some,
The rest on foot (the humbler brethren) come.
Three favour'd places, an unequal time,
Join to support this company sublime:
Ours for the longer period—see how light
Yon parties move, their former friends in sight, [night.
Whose claims are all allow'd, and friendship glads the
Now public rooms shall sound with words divine,
And private lodgings hear how heroes shine;
No talk of pay shall yet on pleasure steal,
But kindest welcome bless the friendly meal;
While o'er the social jug and decent cheer,
Shall be described the fortunes of the year.
Peruse these bills and see what each can do.—
Behold! the prince, the slave, the monk, the Jew,
Change but the garment, and they 'll all engage
To take each part, and act in every age:
Call'd from all houses, what a house are they!
Swept from all barns, our Borough-critics say;
But with some portion of the critic's ire,
We all endure them; there are some admire:
They might have praise confined to farce alone;
Full well they grin, they should not try to groan;
But then our servants' and our seamen's wives
Love all that rant and rapture as their lives;
He who 'Squire Richard's part could well sustain,
Finds as King Richard he must roar amain—
'My horse! my horse!'—Lo! now to their abodes
Come lords and lovers, empresses and gods.
The master-mover of these scenes has made
No trifling gain in this adventurous trade;

Trade we may term it, for he daily buys
Arms out of use and undirected eyes:
These he instructs, and guides them as he can,
And vends each night the manufactured man.
Long as our custom lasts they gladly stay,
Then strike their tents, like Tartars! and away!
The place grows bare where they too long remain,
But grass will rise ere they return again.

Children of Thespis, welcome! knights and queens!
Counts! barons! beauties! when before your scenes,
And mighty monarchs thund'ring from your throne;
Then step behind, and all your glory's gone:
Of crown and palace, throne and guards bereft,
The pomp is vanish'd, and the care is left.
Yet strong and lively is the joy they feel,
When the full house secures the plenteous meal:
Flatt'ring and flatter'd, each attempts to raise,
A brother's merits for a brother's praise:
For never hero shows a prouder heart,
Than he who proudly acts a hero's part;
Nor without cause; the boards, we know can yield
Place for fierce contest, like the tented field.

Graceful to tread the stage, to be in turn
The prince we honour, and the knave we spurn;
Bravely to bear the tumult of the crowd,
The hiss tremendous, and the censure loud:
These are their parts,—and he who these sustains,
Deserves some praise and profit for his pains.
Heroes at least of gentler kind are they,
Against whose swords no weeping widows pray,
No blood their fury sheds, nor havoc marks their way.

Sad happy race! soon raised and soon depress'd,
Your days all pass'd in jeopardy and jest;
Poor without prudence, with afflictions vain,
Not warn'd by misery, not enrich'd by gain;
Whom Justice, pitying, chides from place to place,
A wandering, careless, wretched, merry race.
Whose cheerful looks assume, and play the parts
Of happy rovers with repining hearts;
Then cast off care, and in the mimic pain,
Of tragic woe, feel spirits light and vain,
Distress and hope—the mind's, the body's wear,
The man's affliction, and the actor's tear:
Alternate times of fasting and excess
Are yours, ye smiling children of distress.

Slaves though ye be, your wandering freedom seems,
And with your varying views and restless schemes
Your griefs are transient, as your joys are dreams.

Yet keen those griefs—ah! what avail thy charms
Fair Juliet! what that infant in thine arms;
What those heroic lines thy patience learns,
With all the aid thy present Romeo earns,
Whilst thou art crowded in that lumbering wain,
With all thy plaintive sisters to complain?

Nor is there lack of labour—To rehearse,
Day after day, poor scraps of prose and verse;
To bear each other's spirit, pride, and spite;
To hide in rant the heart-ache of the night;
To dress in gaudy patchwork, and to force
The mind to think on the appointed course;
This is laborious, and may be defined
The bootless labour of the thriftless mind.

There is a veteran Dame. I see her stand
Intent and pensive with her book in hand;
Awhile her thoughts she forces on her part,
Then dwells on objects nearer to the heart
Across the room she paces, gets her tone,
And fits her features for the Danish throne:
To-night a queen—I mark her motion slow,
I hear her speech, and Hamlet's mother know.

Methinks 't is pitiful to see her try
For strength of arms and energy of eye;
With vigour lost, and spirits worn away,
Her pomp and pride she labours to display;
And when awhile she's tried her part to act,
To find her thoughts arrested by some fact;
When struggles more and more severe are seen,
In the plain actress than the Danish queen,—
At length she feels her part, she finds delight,
And fancies all the plaudits of the night:
Old as she is, she smiles at every speech,
And thinks no youthful part beyond her reach;
But as the mist of vanity again
Is blown away, by press of present pain,
Sad and in doubt she to her purse applies
For cause of comfort, where no comfort lies;
Then to her task she sighing turns again—
"Oh! Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain!"

And who that poor consumptive wither'd thing
Who strains her slender throat and strives to sing?
Panting for breath, and forced her voice to drop,
And far unlike the inmate of the shop,
Where she, in youth and health, alert and gay,
Laugh'd off at night the labours of the day;
With novels, verses, fancy's fertile powers,
And sister-converse pass'd the evening hours;

But Cynthia's soul was soft, her wishes strong,
Her judgment weak, and her conclusions wrong;
The morning-call and counter were her dread,
And her contempt the needle and the thread:
But when she read a gentle damsel's part,
Her woe, her wish!—she had them all by heart.
At length the hero of the boards drew nigh,
Who spoke of love till sigh re-echo'd sigh;
He told in honey'd words his deathless flame,
And she his own by tender vows became:
Nor ring nor licence needed souls so fond,
Alfonso's passion was his Cynthia's bond:
And thus the simple girl to shame betray'd
Sinks to the grave forsaken and dismay'd;
Sick without pity, sorrowing without hope,
See her! the grief and scandal of the troop;
A wretched martyr to a childish pride,
Her woe insulted, and her praise denied:
Her humble talents, though derided, used,
Her prospects lost, her confidence abused;
All that remains—for she not long can brave
Increase of evils—is an early grave.

Ye gentle Cynthias of the shop take heed
What dreams ye cherish, and what books ye read!

A decent sum had *Peter Nottage* made
By joining bricks—to him a thriving trade:
Of his employment master and his wife,
This humble tradesman led a lordly life;
The house of kings and heroes lack'd repairs,
And Peter, though reluctant, served the Players:
Connected thus, he heard in way polite,—
"Come Master Nottage, see us play to night."
At first 't was folly, nonsense, idle stuff,
But seen for nothing, it grew well enough;
And better now—now best, and every night
In this fool's paradise he drank delight;
And as he felt the bliss, he wish'd to know
Whence all this rapture and these joys could flow;
For if the seeing could such pleasure bring,
What must the feeling?—feeling like a king?

In vain his wife, his uncle, and his friend,
Cried—"Peter! Peter! let such follies end;
'T is well enough these vagabonds to see,
But would you partner with a showman be?"

"Showman!" said Peter, "did not Quin and Clive,
And Roscius-Garrick, by the science thrive?
Showman!—'t is scandal. I'm by genius led
To join a class who've Shakspeare at their head."

Poor Peter thus by easy steps became
A dreaming candidate for scenic fame,
And, after years consumed, infirm and poor,
He sits and takes the tickets at the door.

Of various men these marching troops are made,—
Pen-spurning clerks, and lads contemning trade;
Waiters and servants by confinement teased,
And youths of wealth by dissipation eased;
With feeling nymphs, who, such resource at hand,
Scorn to obey the rigour of command:
Some, who from higher views by vice are won,
And some of either sex by love undone;
The greater part lamenting as they fall,
What some an honour and advancement call.

There are who names in shame or fear assume,
And hence our Bevilles and our Savilles come:
It honours him, from tailor's board kick'd down,
As Mister Dormer to amuse the town;
Falling, he rises: but a kind there are
Who dwell on former prospects, and despair;
Justly but vainly they their fate deplore,
And mourn their fall who fell to rise no more.

Our merchant *Thompson*, with his sons around,
Most mind and talent in his *Frederick* found:
He was so lively, that his mother knew,
If he were taught, that honour must ensue;
The father's views were in a different line,—
But if at college he were sure to shine,
Then should he go—to prosper who could doubt?—
When schoolboy stigmas would be all wash'd out,
For there were marks upon his youthful face,
'Twixt vice and error—a neglected case—
These would submit to skill; a little time,
And none could trace the error or the crime;
Then let him go, and once at college, he
Might choose his station—what would Frederick be?

'T was soon determined—He could not descend
To pendant laws and lectures without end;
And then the chapel—night and morn to pray,
Or mulct and threaten'd if he kept away;
No! not to be a bishop—so he swore,
And at his college he was seen no more.

His debts all paid, the father, with a sigh,
Placed him in office—"Do, my Frederick, try:
Confine thyself a few short months, and then—"
He tried a fortnight and threw down the pen.

Again demands were hush'd: "My son, you're free
But you're unsettled: take your chance at sea."

So in few days the midshipman, equipp'd,
Received his mother's blessing, and was shipp'd.
Hard was her fortune! soon compell'd to meet
The wretched stripling staggering though the street
For, rash, impetuous, insolent and vain,
The captain sent him to his friends again
About the Borough roved th' unhappy boy,
And ate the bread of every chance-employ!
Of friends he borrow'd, and the parents yet
In secret fondness authorised the debt;
The younger sister, still a child, was taught
To give with feign'd affright the pittance sought,
For now the father cried—"It is too late
For trial more—I leave him to his fate."—
Yet left him not; and with a kind of joy,
The mother heard of her desponding boy;
At length he sicken'd, and he found, when sick
All aid was ready, all attendance quick;
A fever seized him, and at once was lost
The thought of trespass, error, crime and cost:
Th' indulgent parents, knelt beside the youth,
They heard his promise and believed his truth;
And when the danger lessen'd on their view,
They cast off doubt, and hope assurance grew:—
Nursed by his sisters, cherished by his sire,
Begg'd to be glad, encouraged to aspire,
His life, they said, would now all care repay,
And he might date his prospects from that day;
A son, a brother to his home received,
They hoped for all things, and in all believed.
And now will pardon, comfort, kindness draw
The youth from vice? will honour, duty, law?
Alas! not all: the more the trials lent,
The less he seem'd to ponder and repent;
Headstrong, determined in his own career,
He thought reproof unjust and truth severe;
The soul's disease was to its crisis come,
He first abused and they abjured his home;
And when he chose a vagabond to be,
He made his shame his glory—"I'll be free."
Friends, parents, relatives, hope, reason, love,
With anxious ardour for that empire strove;
In vain their strife, in vain the means applied,
They had no comfort, but that all were tried;
One strong vain trial made, the mind to move,
Was the last effort of parental love.
Ev'n then he watch'd his father from his home
And to his mother would for pity come.

Where, as he made her tender terrors rise,
He talk'd of death, and threaten'd for supplies.
  Against a youth so vicious and undone,
All hearts were closed, and every door but one:
The Players received him; they with open heart
Gave him his portion and assign'd his part;
And ere three days were added to his life,
He found a home, a duty and a wife.
  His present friends, though they were nothing nice,
Not ask'd how vicious he, or what his vice,
Still they expected he should now attend
To the joint duty as a useful friend
And leader too declared, with frown severe,
That none should pawn a robe that kings might wear
And much it moved him, when he Hamlet play'd,
To see his Father's Ghost so drunken made:
Then too the temper, the unbending pride
Of this ally, would no reproof abide:—
So leaving these, he march'd away and join'd
Another troop, and other goods purloin'd;
And other characters both gay and sage,
Sober and sad, made stagger on the stage;
Then to rebuke with arrogant disdain,
He gave abuse and sought a home again.
Thus changing scenes, but with unchanging vice,
Engaged by many but with no one twice:
Of this, a last and poor resource, bereft,
He to himself, unhappy guide! was left—
And who shall say where guided? to what seats
Of starving villainy? of thieves and cheats?
  In that sad time of many a dismal scene
Had he a witness, not inactive, been;
Had leagued with petty pilferers, and had crept
Where of each sex degraded numbers slept:
With such associates he was long allied,
Where his capacity for ill was tried,
And that once lost, the wretch was cast aside:
For now, though willing with the worst to act,
He wanted powers for an important fact;
And while he felt as lawless spirits feel,
His hand was palsied, and he could't steal.
  By these rejected, is their lot so strange,
So low! that he could suffer by the change?
Yes! the new station as a fall we judge,—
He now became the harlots' humble drudge,
Their drudge is common: they combined to save
Awhile from starving their submissive slave;
For now his spirit left him, and his pride
His scorn, his rancour, and resentment died;

Few were his feelings—but the keenest these,
The rage of hunger, and the sign for ease;
He who abused indulgence, now became
By want subservient, and by misery tame;
A slave he begg'd forbearance: bent with pain,
He shunn'd the blow,—"Ah! strike me not again."

Thus was he found: the master of a boy
Saw the sad wretch whom he had known a boy
At first in doubt, but Frederick laid aside
All shame, and humbly for his aid applied:
He, tamed and smitten with the storms gone by,
Look'd for compassion through one living eye,
And stretch'd th' unpalsied hand: the seaman felt
His honest heart with gentle pity melt,
And his small boon with cheerful frankness dealt;
Then made enquiries of th' unhappy youth,
Who told, nor shame forbade him, all the truth.

"Young Frederick Thompson, to a chandler's shop
By harlots order'd and afraid to stop!—
What! our good merchant's favourite to be seen
In state so loathsome and in dress so mean?"—

So thought the seaman as he bade adieu,
And, when in port, related all he knew.

But time was lost, enquiry came too late,
Those whom he served knew nothing of his fate,
No! they had seized on what the sailor gave,
Nor bore resistance from their abject slave:
The spoil obtain'd, they cast him from the door
Robb'd, beaten, hungry, pain'd, diseased, and poor

Then nature, pointing to the only spot
Which still had comfort for so dire a lot,
Although so feeble, led him on the way,
And hope look'd forward to a happier day:
He thought, poor prodigal! a father yet
His woes would pity and his crimes forget;
Nor had he brother who with speech severe
Would check the pity or refrain the tear.
A lighter spirit in his bosom rose,
As near the road he sought an hour's repose

And there he found it: he had left the town,
But buildings yet were scatter'd up and down;
To one of these, half-ruin'd and half-built,
Was traced this child of wretchedness and guilt;
There, on the remnant of a beggar's vest,
Thrown by in scorn, the sufferer sought for rest;
There was this scene of vice and woe to close,
And there the wretched body found repose.

LETTER XIII.

THE ALMS-HOUSE AND TRUSTEES.

The frugal Merchant—Rivalship in Modes of Frugality—Private Exceptions to the general Manners—Alms-house built—Its Description—Founder dies—Six Trustees—Sir Denys Brand, a Principal—His Eulogium in the Chronicles of the Day—Truth reckoned invidious on these Occasions—An Explanation of the Magnanimity and Wisdom of Sir Denys—His Kinds of Moderation and Humility—Laughton, his Successor, a planning, ambitious, wealthy Man—Advancement in Life his perpetual Object, and all Things made the Means of it—His Idea of Falsehood—His Resentment dangerous: how removed—Success produces Love of Flattery; his daily Gratification—His Merits and Acts of Kindness—His proper Choice of Alms-men—In this Respect meritorious—His Predecessor not so cautious.

LEAVE now our streets, and in yon place behold
Those pleasant Seats for the reduced and old;
A merchant's gift, whose wife and children died,
When he to saving all his powers applied;
He wore his coat till bare was every thread,
And with the meanest fare his body fed.
He had a female cousin, who with care
Walk'd in his steps, and learn'd of him to spare;
With emulation and success they strove,
Improving still, still seeking to improve,
As if that useful knowledge they would gain—
How little food would human life sustain:
No pauper came their table's crumbs to crave;
Scraping they lived, but not a scrap they gave:
When beggars saw the frugal Merchant pass,
It moved their pity, and they said, "Alas!
Hard is thy fate, my brother," and they felt
A beggar's pride as they that pity dealt:
The dogs, who learn of man to scorn the poor,
Bark'd him away from every decent door,
While they who saw him bare, but thought him rich,
To show respect or scorn, they knew not which.

But while our Merchant seem'd so base and mean
He had his wanderings, sometimes, "not unseen;"
To give in secret was a favourite act,
Yet more than once they took him in the fact:
To scenes of various woe he nightly went,
And serious sums in healing misery spent:

Oft has he cheer'd the wretched, at a rate
For which he daily might have dined on plate;
He has been seen—his hair all silver-white,
Shaking and shining—as he stole by night,
To feel unenvied on his still delight.
A two-fold taste he had; to give and spare,
Both were his duties, and had equal care;
It was his joy, to sit alone and fast.
Then send a widow and her boys repast:
Tears in his eyes would, spite of him appear,
But he from other eyes has kept the tear:
All in a wintry night from far he came,
To soothe the sorrows of a suffering dame;
Whose husband robb'd him, and to whom he meant
A ling'ring, but reforming punishment:
Home then he walk'd, and found his anger rise,
When fire and rushlight met his troubled eyes;
But these extinguish'd, and his prayer address'd
To Heaven in hope, he calmly sank to rest.

His seventieth year was pass'd, and then was seen
A building rising on the northern green:
There was no blinding all his neighbours' eyes,
Or surely no one would have seen it rise;
Twelve rooms contiguous stood, and six were near,
There men were placed, and sober matrons here;
There were behind small useful gardens made,
Benches before, and trees to give them shade,
In the first room were seen, above, below,
Some marks of taste, a few attempts at show,
The founder's picture and his arms were there
(Not till he left us,) and an elbow'd chair;
There, 'mid these signs of his superior place,
Sat the mild ruler of this humble race.

Within the row are men who strove in vain,
Through years of trouble, wealth and ease to gain:
Less must they have than an appointed sum,
And freemen been, or hither must not come:
They should be decent, and command respect
(Though needing fortune,) whom these doors protect,
And should for thirty dismal years have tried
For peace unfelt and competence denied.

Strange! that o'er men thus train'd in sorrow's school,
Power must be held, and they must live by rule;
Infirm, corrected by misfortunes, old,
Their habits settled and their passions cold;
Of health, wealth, power, and worldly cares bereft,
Still must they not at liberty be left.
There must be one to rule them, to restrain
And guide the movements of his erring train.

If then control imperious, check severe,
Be needed where such reverend men appear;
To what would youth, without such checks, aspire
Free the wild wish, uncurb'd the strong desire!
And where (in college or in camp) they found
The heart ungovern'd and the hand unbound?
His house endow'd, the generous man resign'd
All power to rule, nay power of choice declined;
He and the female saint survived to view
Their work complete, and bade the world adieu!
Six are the Guardians of this happy seat,
And one presides when they on business meet;
As each expires, the five a brother choose;
Nor would *Sir Denys Brand* the charge refuse;
True, 't was beneath him, "but to do men good
Was motive never by his heart withstood:"
He too is gone, and they again must strive
To find a man in whom his gifts survive.
Now, in the various records of the dead,
Thy worth, Sir Denys, shall be weigh'd and read.
There we the glory of thy house shall trace,
With each alliance of thy noble race.

Yes! here we have him!—"Came in William's reign
The Norman *Brand!* the blood without a stain:
From the fierce Dane and ruler Saxon clear,
Pict, Irish, Scot, or Cambrian mountaineer;
But the pure Norman was the sacred spring,
And he, Sir Denys, was in heart a king:
Erect in person and so firm in soul,
Fortune he seem'd to govern and control,
Generous as he who gives his all away,
Prudent as one who toils for weekly pay;
In him all merits were decreed to meet,
Sincere though cautious, frank and yet discreet.
Just all his dealings, faithful every word,
His passions' master, and his temper's lord."

Yet more, kind dealers in decaying fame?
His magnanimity you next proclaim:
You give him learning, join'd with sound good sense,
And match his wealth with his benevolence;
What hides the multitude of sins, you add,
Yet seem to doubt if sins he ever had.

Poor honest Truth! thou writ'st of living men
And art a railer and detractor then:
They die, again to be described, and now
A foe to merit and mankind art thou!

Why banish Truth? It injures not the
It aids not them with flattery to be fed.

And when mankind such perfect pictures view,
They copy less, the more they think them true.
Let us a mortal as he was behold,
And see the dross adhering to the gold;
When we the errors of the virtuous state,
Then erring men their worth may emulate

View then this picture of a noble mind,
Let him be wise, magnanimous, and kind;
What was the wisdom? Was it not the frown
That keeps all question, all enquiry down?
His words were powerful and decisive all,
But his slow reasons came for no man's call
"'Tis thus," he cried, no doubt with kind intent,
To give results and spare all argument:—
"Let it be spared—all men at least agree
Sir Denys Brand had magnanimity:
His were no vulgar charities; none saw
Him like the Merchant to the hut withdraw;
He left to meaner minds the simple deed,
By which the houseless rest, the hungry feed,
His was a public bounty vast and grand,
'T was not in him to work with viewless hand;
He raised the Room that towers above the street,
A public room where grateful parties meet;
He first the Life-boat plann'd; to him the place
Is deep in debt—'t was he reviv'd the Race;
To every public act this hearty friend
Would give with freedom or with frankness lend;
His money built the Jail, nor prisoner yet
Sits at his ease, but he must feel the debt;
To these let candour add his vast display,
Around his mansion all is grand and gay,
And this is bounty with the name of pay."

I grant the whole, nor from one deed retract,
But wish recorded too the private act.
All these were great, but still our hearts approve
Those simpler tokens of the Christian love;
'T would give me joy some gracious deed to meet,
That has not call'd for glory through the street:
Who felt for many, could not always shun,
In some soft moment to be kind to one;
And yet they tell us, when Sir Denys died,
That not a widow in the Borough sigh'd;
Great were his gifts, his mighty heart I own,
But why describe what all the world has known?

The rest is petty pride, the useless art
Of a vain mind to hide a swelling heart:
Small was his private room; men found him there
By a plain table, on a paltry chair;

A wretched floor cloth, and some prints around,
The easy purchase of a single pound:
Those humble trifles and that study small
Make a strong contrast with the servants' hall
There barely comfort, here a proud excess,
The pompous seat of pamper'd idleness,
Where the sleek rogues with one consent declare,
They would not live upon his honour's fare;
He daily took but one half-hour to dine,
On one poor dish and some three sips of wine;
Then he'd abuse them for their sumptuous feasts,
And say, "My friends! you make yourselves like beasts;
One dish suffices any man to dine,
But you are greedy as a herd of swine;
Learn to be temperate."—Had they dared t' obey,
He would have praised and turn'd them all away.

Friends met Sir Denys riding in his ground,
And there the meekness of his spirit found:
For that grey coat, not new for many a year,
Hides all that would like decent dress appear;
An old brown pony 't was his will to ride,
Who shuffled onward, and from side to side;
A five-pound purchase, but so fat and sleek,
His very plenty made the creature weak.

"Sir Denys Brand! and on so poor a steed!"
"Poor! it may be—such things I never heed:"
And who that youth behind, of pleasant mien,
Equipp'd as one who wishes to be seen,
Upon a horse, twice victor for a plate,
A noble hunter, bought at dearest rate?—
Him the lad fearing yet resolved to guide,
He curbs his spirit while he strokes his pride.

"A handsome youth, Sir Denys; and a horse
Of finer figure never trod the course,—
Yours, without question?"—"Yes! I think a groom
Bought me the beast; I cannot say the sum:
I ride him not; it is a foolish pride
Men have in cattle—but my people ride.
The boy is—hark ye, sirrah! what's your name,
Ay, Jacob, yes! I recollect—the same;
As I bethink me now, a tenant's son—
I think a tenant,—is your father one?"

There was an idle boy who ran about,
And found his master's humble spirit out;
He would at awful distance snatch a look,
Then run away and hide him in some nook;
For oh!" quoth he "I dare not fix my sight
On him, his grandeur puts me in a fright;

On: Mister Jacob, when you wait on him,
Do you not quake and tremble every limb?"
The Steward soon had orders—"Summers, see
That Sam be clothed, and let him wait on me."

Sir Denys died, bequeathing all affairs
In trust to *Laughton's* long-experienced cares,
Before a Guardian, and Sir Denys dead,
All rule and power devolved upon his head,
Numbers are call'd to govern, but in fact
Only the powerful and assuming act.
Laughton, too wise to be a dupe to fame,
Cared not a whit of what descent he came,
Till he was rich; he then conceived the thought
To fish for pedigree, but never caught:
All his desire, when he was young and poor,
Was to advance; he never cared for more:
"Let me buy, sell, be factor, take a wife,
Take any road to get along in life."
Was he a miser then? a robber? foe
To those who trusted? a deceiver?—No!
He was ambitious; all his powers of mind
Were to one end controll'd, improved, combined;
Wit, learning, judgment, were by his account,
Steps for the ladder he design'd to mount:
Such step was money; wealth was but his slave,
For power he gain'd it, and for power he gave:
Full well the Borough knows that he'd the art
Of bringing money to the surest mart:
Friends too were aids,—they led to certain ends,
Increase of power and claim on other friends.
A favourite step was marriage: then he gain'd
Seat in our Hall, and o'er his party reign'd;
Houses and lands he bought, and long'd to buy,
But never drew the springs of purchase dry,
And thus at last they answer'd every call,
The failing found him ready for their fall:
He walks along the street, the mart, the quay,
And looks and mutters, "This belongs to me."
His passions all partook the general bent;
Interest inform'd him when he should resent,
How long resist, and on what terms relent:
In points where he determined to succeed,
In vain might reason or compassion plead;
But gain'd his point, he was the best of men,
'T was loss of time to be vexatious then:
Hence he was mild to all men whom he led,
Of all who dared resist, the scourge and dread.

Falsehood in him was not the useless lie
Of boasting pride or laughing vanity;
It was the guileful, the persuading art,
That made its way and won the doubting heart,
Which argued, soften'd, humbled, and prevail'd
Nor was it tried till ev'ry truth had fail'd;
No sage on earth could more than he despise
Degrading, poor, unprofitable lies.
Though fond of gain, and grieved by wanton waste,
To social parties he had no distaste:
With one presiding purpose in his view,
He sometimes could descend to trifle too!
Yet, in these moments, he had still the art
To ope the looks and close the guarded heart;
And, like the public host, has sometimes made
A grand repast, for which the guests have paid.
At length, with power endued and wealthy grown,
Frailties and passions, long suppress'd, were shown:
Then to provoke him was a dangerous thing,
His pride would punish, and his temper sting:
His powerful hatred sought th' avenging hour,
And his proud vengeance struck with all his power,
Save when th' offender took a prudent way
The rising storm of fury to allay:
This might he do, and so in safety sleep,
By largely casting to the angry deep!
Or, better yet (its swelling force t' assuage,)
By pouring oil of flattery on its rage.
And now, of all the heart approved, possess'd,
Fear'd, favour'd, follow'd, dreaded and caress'd,
He gently yields to one mellifluous joy,
The only sweet that is not found to cloy,
Bland adulation!—other pleasures pall
On the sick taste, and transient are they all;
But this one sweet has such enchanting power,
The more we take, the faster we devour:
Nauseous to those who must the dose apply,
And most disgusting to the standers-by,
Yet in all companies will Laughton feed,
Nor care how grossly men perform the deed.
As gapes the nursling, or what comes more near
Some Friendly Island chief, for hourly cheer:
When wives and slaves, attending round his seat,
Prepare by turns the masticated meat:
So for this master, husband, parent, friend,
His ready slaves their various efforts blend,
And, to their lord still eagerly inclined,
Pour the crude [illegible] of a dependent mind

But let the Muse assign the man his due,
Worth he possess'd, nor were his virtues few;—
He sometimes help'd the injured in their cause;
His power and purse have back'd the failing laws;
He for religion has a due respect.
And all his serious notions are correct;
Although he pray'd and languish'd for a son,
He grew resign'd when Heaven denied him one;
He never to this quiet mansion sends
Subjects unfit, in compliment to friends;
Not so Sir Denys, who would yet protest
He always chose the worthiest and the best:
Not men in trade by various loss brought down,
But those whose glory once amazed the town,
Who their last guinea in their pleasures spent,
Yet never fell so low as to repent:
To these his pity he could largely deal,
Wealth they had known, and therefore want could feel
Three seats were vacant while Sir Denys reign'd
And three such favourites their admission gain'd;
These let us view, still more to understand
The moral feelings of Sir Denys Brand.

LETTER XIV.

LIFE OF BLANEY.

Blaney, a wealthy Heir, dissipated, and reduced to Poverty—His Fortune restored by Marriage: again consumed—His Manner of living in the West Indies—Recalled to a larger Inheritance—His more refined and expensive Luxuries—His Method of quieting Conscience—Death of his Wife—Again become Poor—His Method of supporting Existence—His Ideas of Religion—His Habits and Connections when old—Admitted into the Alms-house.

OBSERVE that tall pale Veteran! what a look
Of shame and guilt!—who cannot read that book?
Misery and mirth are blended in his face,
Much innate vileness and some outward grace;
There wishes strong and stronger griefs are seen,
Looks ever changed, and never one serene:
Show not that manner, and these features all,
The serpent's cunning and the sinner's fall?
Hark to that laughter!—'t is the way he takes
To force applause for each vile jest he makes.

Such is yon man, by partial favour sent
To these calm seats to ponder and repent.
Blaney, a wealthy heir at twenty-one,
At twenty-five was ruin'd and undone,—
These years with grievous crimes we need not load
He found his ruin in the common road!—
Gamed without skill, without inquiry bought,
Lent without love, and borrow'd without thought.
But, gay and handsome, he had soon the dower
Of a kind wealthy widow in his power:
Then he aspired to loftier flights of vice,
To singing harlots of enormous price;
He took a jockey in his gig to buy
A horse, so valued, that a duke was shy:
To gain the plaudits of the knowing few,
Gamblers and grooms, what would not Blaney do?
His dearest friend at that improving age.
Was Hounslow Dick, who drove the western stage.
Cruel he was not—If he left his wife,
He left her to her own pursuits in life;
Deaf to reports, to all expenses blind,
Profuse, not just, and careless, but not kind.
Yet, thus assisted, ten long winters pass'd
In wasting guineas ere he saw his last;
Then he began to reason, and to feel
He could not dig, nor had he learn'd to steal,
And should he beg as long as he might live,
He justly fear'd that nobody would give:
But he could charge a pistol, and at will,
All that was mortal, by a bullet kill:
And he was taught, by those whom he would call
Man's surest guides—that he was mortal all.
While thus he thought, still waiting for the day,
When he should dare to blow his brains away,
A place for him a kind relation found, [ground
Where England's monarch ruled, but far from English
He gave employ that might for bread suffice,
Correct his habits and restrain his vice.
Here Blaney tried (what such man's miseries teach)
To find what pleasures were within his reach;
These he enjoy'd, though not in just the style
He once possess'd them in his native isle;
Congenial souls he found in every place,
Vice in all soils, and charms in every race:
His lady took the same amusing way,
And laugh'd at Time till he had turn'd them grey:
At length for England once again they steer'd,
Y ancient views and new designs endear'd

His kindred died, and Blaney now became
An heir to one who never heard his name.
What could he now?—The man had tried before
The joys of youth, and they were joys no more;
To vicious pleasure he was still inclined,
But vice must now be season'd and refined;
Then as a swine he would on pleasure seize,
Now common pleasures had no power to please:
Beauty alone has for the vulgar charms,
He wanted beauty trembling with alarms:
His was no more a youthful dream of joy,
The wretch desired to ruin and destroy;
He bought indulgence with a boundless price,
Most pleased when decency bow'd down to vice,
When a fair dame her husband's honour sold,
And a frail c' ntess play'd for Blaney's gold.
"But did' ,t conscience in her anger rise?"
Yes! and he .earn'd her terrors to despise;
When stung by thought, to soothing books he fled,
And grew composed and harden d as he read;
Tales of Voltaire, and essays gay and slight,
Pleased him, and shone with their phosphoric light
Which, though it rose from objects vile and base,
Where'er it came threw splendour on the place,
And was that light which the deluded youth,
And this grey sinner, deem'd the light of truth.
He different works for different cause admired,
Some fix'd his judgment, some his passions fir'd;
To cheer the mind and raise a dormant flame,
He had the books, decreed to lasting shame,
Which those who read are careful not to name:
These won to vicious act the yielding heart,
And then the cooler reasoners soothed the smart.
He heard of Blount, and Mandeville, and Chubb,
How they the doctors of their day would drub;
How Hume had dwelt on Miracles so well,
That none would now believe a miracle;
And though he cared not works so grave to read,
He caught their faith, and sign'd the sinner's creed.
Thus was he pleased to join the laughing side,
Nor ceased the laughter when his lady died;
Yet was he kind and careful of her fame,
And on her tomb inscribed a virtuous name;
"A tender wife, respected, and so forth."—
The marble still bears witness to the worth
He has some children, but he knows not where,
Somet ing they cost, but neither love nor care;

A father's feelings he has never known,
His joys, his sorrows, have been all his own.
He would now build—and lofty seat he built,
And sought, in various ways, relief from guilt
Restless, for ever anxious to obtain
Ease for the heart by ramblings of the brain,
He would have pictures, and of course a Taste.
And found a thousand means his wealth to waste
Newmarket steeds he bought at mighty cost;
They sometimes won, but Blaney always lost.
Quick came his ruin, came when he had still
For life a relish, and in pleasure skill:
By his own idle reckoning he supposed
His wealth would last him till his life was closed;
But no! he found this final hoard was spent,
While he had years to suffer and repent.
Yet, at the last, his noble mind to show,
And in his misery how he bore the blow,
He view'd his only guinea, then suppress'd,
For a short time, the tumults in his breast,
And, moved, by pride, by habit and despair,
Gave it an opera-bird to hum an air.
Come ye! who live for pleasure, come, behold
A man of pleasure when he's poor and old;
When he looks back through life, and cannot find
A single action to relieve his mind;
When he looks forward, striving still to keep
A steady prospect of eternal sleep;
When not one friend is left, of all the train
Whom 't was his pride and boast to entertain,—
Friends now employ'd from house to house to run
And say, "Alas! poor Blaney is undone!"—
Those whom he shook with ardour by the hand,
By whom he stood as long as he could stand,
Who seem'd to him from all deception clear,
And who, more strange! might think themselves sincere
Lo! now the hero shuffling through the town,
To hunt a dinner and to beg a crown;
To tell an idle tale, that boys may smile;
To bear a strumpet's billet-doux a mile;
To call a wanton for a youth of wealth
(With reverend view to both his taste and health)
To be a useful, needy thing between
Fear and desire—the pander and the screen;
To flatter pictures, houses, horses, dress,
The wildest fashion, or the worst excess;
To be the grey seducer, and entice
Unbearded folly into acts of vice;

And then to level every fence which law
And virtue fix to keep the mind in awe,
He first inveigles youth to walk astray,
Next prompts and soothes them in their fatal way
Then vindicates the deed, and makes the mind his prey

Unhappy man! what pains he takes to state—
(Proof of his fear!) that all below is fate;
That all proceed in one appointed track,
Where none can stop, or take their journey back:
Then what is vice or virtue?—Yet he'll rail
At priests till memory and quotation fail:
He reads, to learn the various ills they've done,
And calls them vipers, every mother's son.

He is the harlot's aid, who wheedling tries
To move her friend for vanity's supplies:
To weak indulgence he allures the mind,
Loth to be duped, but willing to be kind:
And if successful—what the labour pays?
He gets the friend's contempt and Chloe's praise,
Who, in her triumph, condescends to say,
"What a good creature Blaney was to-day!"

Hear the poor demon when the young attend,
And willing ear to vile experience lend;
When he relates (with laughing, leering eye)
The tale licentious, mix'd with blasphemy:
No genuine gladness his narrations cause,
The frailest heart denies sincere applause:
And many a youth has turn'd him half aside,
And laugh'd aloud the sign of shame to hide.

Blaney, no aid in his vile cause to lose,
Buys pictures, prints, and a licentious muse!
He borrows every help from every art,
To stir the passions and mislead the heart:
But from the subject let us soon escape,
Nor give this feature all its ugly shape;
Some to their crimes escape from satire owe,
Who shall describe what Blaney dares to show?
While thus the man to vice and passion slave,
Was, with his follies, moving to the grave,
The ancient ruler of this mansion died,
And Blaney boldly for the seat applied:
Sir Denys Brand, then guardian, join'd his suit;
"'T is true," said he, "the fellow's quite a brute—
A very beast, but yet, with all his sin,
He has a manner—let the devil in."

They half complied, they gave the wish'd retreat,
But raised a worthier to the vacant seat.

Thus forced on ways unlike each former way,
Thus led to prayer without a heart to pray,
He quits the gay and rich, the young and free,
Among the badge-men, with a badge to be:
He sees an humble tradesman raised to rule
The grey-beard pupils of this moral school;
Where he himself, an old licentious boy,
Will nothing learn, and nothing can enjoy;
In temp'rate measures he must eat and drink,
And, pain of pains! must live alone and think.
In vain, by fortune's smiles, thrice affluent made,
Still has he debts of ancient date unpaid;
Thrice into penury by error thrown;
Not one right maxim has he made his own;
The old men shun him,—some his vices hate,
And all abhor his principles and prate;
Nor love nor care for him will mortal show,
Save a frail sister in the female row.

LETTER XV.

INHABITANTS OF THE ALMS-HOUSE.

CLELIA.

Her lively and pleasant Manners—Her Reading and Decision—Her intercourse with different Classes of Society—Her Kind of Character—The favoured Lover—Her Management of him: his of her—After one Period, Clelia with an Attorney: her Manner and Situation there—Another such Period, when her Fortune still declines—Mistress of an Inn—A Widow—Another such Interval: she becomes poor and infirm, but still vain and frivolous—The fallen Vanity—Admitted into the House: meets Blaney.

We had a sprightly nymph—in every town
Are some such sprights, who wander up and down;
She had her useful arts, and could contrive,
In Time's despite, to stay at twenty-five;—
"Here will I rest: move on, thou lying year,
This is mine age, and I will rest me here."
Arch was her look, and she had pleasant ways
Your good opinion of her heart to raise:
Her speech was lively, and with ease express'd,
And well she judged the tempers she address'd:
If some soft stripling had her keenness felt,
She knew the way to make his anger melt:

Wit was allow'd her, though but few could bring
Direct example of a witty thing;
'T was that gay, pleasant, smart, engaging speech,
Her beaux admired, and just within their reach;
Not indiscreet, perhaps, but yet more free
Than prudish nymphs allow their wit to be.
Novels and plays, with poems old and new,
Were all the books our nymph attended to;
Yet from the press no treatise issued forth,
But she would speak precisely of its worth.
She with the London stage familiar grew
And every actor's name and merit knew;
She told how this or that their part mistook,
And of the rival Romeos gave the look:
Of either house 't was hers the strength to see,
Then judge with candour—"Drury Lane for me!"
What made this knowledge, what this skill complete?
A fortnight's visit in Whitechapel Street.
Her place in life was rich and poor between,
With those a favourite, and with these a queen;
She could her parts assume, and condescend
To friends more humble while an humble friend;
And thus a welcome, lively guest could pass,
Threading her pleasant way from class to class.
"Her reputation?"—That was like her wit,
And seemed her manner and her state to fit:
Something there was, what none presumed to say,
Clouds lightly passing on a smiling day,—
Whispers and hints which went from ear to ear,
And mix'd reports no judge on earth could clear.
But of each sex a friendly number press'd
To joyous banquets this alluring guest:
There, if indulging mirth, and freed from awe,
If pleasing all, and pleased with all she saw,
Her speech were free, and such as freely dwelt
On the same feelings all around her felt;
Or if some fond presuming favourite tried
To come so near as once to be denied;
Yet not with brow so stern or speech so nice,
But that he ventured on denial twice:—
If these have been, and so has Scandal taught,
Yet Malice never found the proof she sought.
But then came one, the Lovelace of his day,
Rich, proud, and crafty, handsome, brave, and gay
Yet loved he not those labour'd plans and arts,
But left the business to the ladies' hearts,
And when he found them in a proper train,
He thought all else superfluous and vain.

But in that training he was deeply taught,
And rarely fail'd of gaining all he sought;
He knew how far directly on to go;
How to recede and dally to and fro;
How to make all the passions his allies,
And, when he saw them in contention rise,
To watch the wrought-up heart, and conquer by surprise.
Our heroine fear'd him not; it was her part,
To make sure conquest of such gentle heart—
Of one so mild and humble: for she saw
In Henry's eye a love chastised by awe.
Her thoughts of virtue were not all sublime,
Nor virtuous all her thoughts; 't was not her time
To bait each hook, in every way to please,
And the rich prize with dext'rous hand to seize.
She had no virgin-terrors: she could stray
In all love's maze, nor fear to lose her way;
Nay, could go near the precipice, nor dread
A failing caution or a giddy head;
She'd fix her eyes upon the roaring flood,
And dance upon the brink where danger stood.
'T was nature all, she judged in one so young,
To drop the eye, and falter in the tongue;
To be about to take, and then command
His daring wish, and only view the hand:
Yes! all was nature; it became a maid
Of gentle soul t' encourage love afraid;—
He, so unlike the confident and bold,
Would fly in mute despair to find her cold:
The young and tender germ requires the sun
To make it spread: it must be smiled upon.
Thus the kind virgin gentle means devised,
To gain a heart so fond, a hand so prized;
More gentle still she grew, to change her way,
Would cause confusion, danger, and delay:
Thus (an increase of gentleness her mode,)
She took a plain, unvaried, certain road,
And every hour believed success was near,
Till there was nothing left to hope or fear.
It must be own'd that in this strife of hearts,
Man has advantage—has superior arts:
The lover's aim is to the nymph unknown.
Nor is she always certain of her own;
Or has her fears, nor these can so disguise,
But he who searches, reads them in her eyes,
In the avenging frown, in the regretting sighs:
These are his signals, and he learns to steer
The straighter course whenever they appear

"Pass we ten years, and what was Clelia's fate?"
At an attorney's board alert she sate,
Not legal mistress. he with other men
Once sought her hand, but other views were then;
And when he knew he might the bliss command,
He other blessing sought without the hand:
For still he felt alive the lambent flame.
And offer'd her a home,—and home she came.

There, though her higher friendships lived no more
She loved to speak of what she shared before—
"Of the dear Lucy, heiress of the hall,—
Of good Sir Peter,—of their annual ball,
And the fair countess!—Oh! she loved them all!"
The humbler clients of her friend would stare,
The knowing smile,—but neither caused her care;
She brought her spirits to her humble state,
And soothed with idle dreams her frowning fate.

"Ten summers passed, and how was Clelia then?"—
Alas! she suffered in this trying ten.
The pair had parted: who to him attend,
Must judge the nymph unfaithful to her friend;
But who on her would equal faith bestow,
Would think him rash,—and surely she must know.

Then as a matron Clelia taught a school,
But nature gave not talents fit for rule:
Yet now, though marks of wasting years were seen
Some touch of sorrow, some attack of spleen;
Still there was life, a spirit quick and gay,
And lively speech and elegant array.

The Griffin's landlord these allured so far
He made her mistress of his heart and bar:
He had no idle retrospective whim,
Till she was his, her deeds concern'd not him
So far was well,—but Clelia thought not fit
(In all the Griffin needed) to submit:
Gaily to dress and in the bar preside,
Soothed the poor spirit of degraded pride;
But cooking, waiting, welcoming a crew
Of noisy guests, were arts she never knew:
Hence daily wars, with temporary truce,
His vulgar insult, and her keen abuse;
And as their spirits wasted in the strife,
Both took the Griffin's ready aid of life;
But she with greater prudence—Harry tried
More powerful aid, and in the trial died:
Yet drew down vengeance: in no distant time,
Th' insolvent Griffin struck his wings sublime—

Forth from her palace walk'd the ejected queen,
And show'd to frowning fate a look serene;
Gay spite of time, though poor, yet well attired,
Kind without love, and vain if not admired.

Another term is past; ten other years
In various trials, troubles, views, and fears:
Oi these some pass'd in small attempts at trade;
Houses she kept for widowers lately made;
For now she said, "They'll miss th' endearing friend,
And I'll be there the soften'd heart to bend:"
And true a part was done as Clelia plann'd—
The heart was soften'd, but she miss'd the hand.
She wrote a novel, and Sir Denys said
The dedication was the best he read;
But Edgeworths, Smiths, and Radcliffes so engross'd
The public ear, that all her pains were lost.
To keep a toy-shop was attempt the last,
There too she fail'd, and schemes and hopes were past.
Now friendless, sick, and old, and wanting bread,
The first-born tears of fallen pride were shed—
True, bitter tears; and yet that wounded pride,
Among the poor, for poor distinctions sigh'd.
Though now her tales were to her audience fit;
Though loud her tones, and vulgar grown her wit,
Though now her dress—(but let me not explain
The piteous patchwork of the needy-vain,
The flirtish form to coarse materials lent,
And one poor robe through fifty fashions sent:)
Though all within was sad, without was mean,—
Still 't was her wish, her comfort, to be seen:
She would to plays on lowest terms resort,
Where once her box was to the beaux a court;
And, strange delight! to that same house where she
Join'd in the dance, all gaiety and glee,
Now with the menials crowding to the wall,
She'd see, not share, the pleasures of the ball,
And with degraded vanity unfold,
How she too triumph'd in the years of old.
To her poor friends, 't was now her pride to tell,
On what a height she stood before she fell;
At church she points to one tall seat, and "There
We sat," she cries, "when my papa was mayor."
Not quite correct in what she now relates,
She alters persons, and she forges dates,
And, finding memory's weaker help decay'd
She boldly calls invention to her aid.

Touch'd by the pity he had felt before,
For her Sir Denys oped the Alms-house door:
"With all her faults," he said, "the woman knew
How to distinguish—had a manner too;
And, as they say she is allied to some
In decent station—let the creature come."
Here she and Blaney meet, and take their view
Of all the pleasures they would still pursue:
Hour after hour they sit, and nothing hide
Of vices past; their follies are their pride,
What to the sober and the cool are crimes,
They boast—exulting in those happy times.
The darkest deeds no indignat on raise,
The purest virtue never wins their praise;
But still they on their ancient joys dilate,
Still with regret departed glories state,
And mourn their grievous fall, and curse their rigorous fate.

LETTER XVI.

INHABITANTS OF THE ALMS-HOUSE.

BENBOW.

Benbow, an improper companion for the Badgemen of the Alms-house—He resembles Bardolph—Left in Trade by his Father—Contracts useless Friendships—His Friends drink with him, and employ others—Called worthy and honest! Why—Effect of Wine on the Mind of Man—Benbow's common Subject—The Praise of departed Friends and Patrons—'Squire Asgill, at the Grange: his Manners, Servants, Friends—True to his Church—Ought therefore to be spared—His Son's different Conduct—Vexation of the Father's Spirit if admitted to see the Alteration—Captain Dowling, a boon Companion, ready to drink at all Times, and with any Company: famous in his Club-room—His easy Departure—Dolly Murray, a Maiden advanced in Years: abides by Ratafia and Cards—Her free Manners—Her Skill in the Game—Her Preparation and Death—Benbow, how interrupted: his Submission.

See! yonder badgeman, with that glowing face,
A meteor shining in this sober place;
Vast sums were paid, and many years were past
Ere gems so rich around their radiance cast!
Such was the fiery front that Bardolph wore,
Guiding his master to the tavern door;
There first that meteor rose, and there alone,
In its due place, the rich effulgence shone:

But this strange fire the seat of peace invades,
And shines portentous in these solemn shades.
Benbow, a boon companion, long approved
By jovial sets, and (as he thought) beloved.
Was judged as one to joy and friendship prone,
And deem'd injurious to himself alone;
Gen'rous and free, he paid but small regard
To trade, and fail'd, and some declared "'twas hard."
These were his friends—his foes conceiv'd the case
Of common kind; he sought and found disgrace:
The reasoning few, who neither scorn'd nor loved,
His feelings pitied and his faults reproved.
Benbow, the father, left possessions fair,
A worthy name and business to his heir;
Benbow, the son, those fair possessions sold,
And lost his credit, while he spent the gold:
He was a jovial trader: men enjoy'd
The night with him; his day was unemploy'd;
So when his credit and his cash were spent,
Here, by mistaken pity, he was sent;
Of late he came, with passions unsubdued,
And shared and cursed the hated solitude,
Where gloomy thoughts arise, where grievous cares intrude
Known but in drink,—he found an easy friend,
Well pleased his worth and honour to commend;
And thus inform'd, the guardian of the trust
Heard the applause and said the claim was just;
A worthy soul! unfitted for the strife,
Care, and contention of a busy life;—
Worthy, and why?—that o'er the midnight bowl
He made his friend the partner of his soul,
And any man his friend;—then thus in glee,
"I speak my mind, I love the truth," quoth he;
Till 't was his fate that useful truth to find,
'T is sometimes prudent not to speak the mind.
With wine inflated, man is all uplifted,
And feels a power which he believes his own·
With fancy soaring to the skies, he thinks
His all the virtues all the while he drinks;
But when the gas from the balloon is gone,
When sober thoughts and serious cares come on,
Where then the worth that in himself he found?—
Vanish'd—and he sank grov'ling on the ground.
Still some conceit will Benbow's mind inflate,
Poor as he is,—'t is pleasant to relate
The joys he once possess'd—it soothes his present state
Seated with some grey beadsman, he regrets
His former feasting, though it swell'd his debts:

Topers once famed, his friends in earlier days,
Well he describes, and thinks description praise:
Each hero's worth with much delight he paints:
Martyrs they were, and he would make them saints.
"Alas! alas! Old England now may say
My glory withers: it has had its day:
We're fall'en on evil times: men read and think;
Our bold forefathers loved to fight and drink.
"Then lived the good 'Squire Asgill—what a change
Has death and fashion shown us at the Grange!
He bravely thought it best became his rank,
That all his tenants and his tradesmen drank;
He was delighted from his favourite room
To see them 'cross the park go daily home,
Praising aloud the liquor and the host,
And striving who should venerate him most.
"No pride had he, and there was difference small
Between the master's and the servant's hall;
And here or there the guests were welcome all.
Of Heaven's free gifts he took no special care,
He never quarrel'd for a simple hare;
But sought, by giving sport, a sportsman's name,
Himself a poacher, though at other game:
He never planted nor enclosed—his trees
Grew like himself, untroubled and at ease:
Bounds of all kinds he hated, and had felt
Choked and imprison'd in a modern belt,
Which some rare genius now had twined about
The good old house, to keep old neighbours out.
Along his valleys, in the evening-hours,
The borough-damsels stray'd to gather flowers,
Or, by the brakes and brushwood of the park,
To take their pleasant rambles in the dark.
Some prudes, of rigid kind, forbore to call
On the kind females—favourites at the hall:
But better natures saw, with much delight
The different orders of mankind unite:
T was schooling pride to see the footman wait,
Smile on his sister and receive her plate.
"His worship ever was a churchman true,
He held in scorn the methodistic crew;
May God defend the Church, and save the King
He'd pray devoutly and divinely sing.
Admit that he the holy day would spend
As priests approved not, still he was a friend:
Much then I blame the preacher as too nice
To call such trifles by the name of vice;

Hinting, though gently, and with cautious speech,
Of good example—'t was their trade to preach:
But still 't was pity, when the worthy 'squire
Stuck to the church, what more could they require?
'T was almost joining that fanatic crew,
To throw such morals at his honour's pew;
A weaker man, had he been so reviled,
Had left the place—he only swore and smiled.

"But think, ye rectors and ye curates, think,
Who are your friends, and at their frailties wink;
Conceive not—mounted on your Sunday-throne,
Your fire-brands fall upon your foes alone;
They strike your patrons—and should all withdraw,
In whom your wisdom may discern a flaw,
You would the flower of all their audience lose,
And spend your crackers on their empty pews.

"The father dead, the son has found a wife,
And lives a formal, proud, unsocial life;—
The lands are now enclosed; the tenants all
Save at a rent-day, never see the hall:
No lass is suffer'd o'er the walks to come,
And if there's love, they have it all at home.

"Oh! could the ghost of our good 'squire arise,
And see such change; would it believe its eyes?
Would it not glide about from place to place,
And mourn the manners of a feebler race?
At that long table, where the servants found
Mirth and abundance while the year went round,
Where a huge pollard on the winter fire,
At a huge distance made them all retire:
Where not a measure in the room was kept,
And but one rule—they tippled till they slept—
There would it see a pale old hag preside,
A thing made up of stinginess and pride;
Who carves the meat, as if the flesh could feel;
Careless whose flesh must miss the plenteous meal;
Here would the ghost a small coal fire behold,
Not fit to keep one body from the cold;
Then would it flit to higher rooms, and stay
To view a dull, dress'd company at play;
All the old comfort, all the genial fare
For ever gone! how sternly would it stare:
And though it might not to their view appear,
'T would cause among them lassitude and fear;
Then wait to see—where he delight has seen—
The dire effect of fretfulness and spleen.

"Such were the worthies of these better days;
We had their blessings—they shall have our praise.

"Of Captain Dowling would you hear me speak?
I'd sit and sing his praises for a week:
He was a man, and man-like all his joy,—
I'm led to question was he ever boy?
Beef was his breakfast; if from sea and salt,
It relish'd better with his wine of malt;
Then, till he dined, if walking in or out,
Whether the gravel teased him or the gout,
Though short in wind and flannel'd every limb,
He drank with all who had concerns with him:
Whatever trader, agent, merchant, came,
They found him ready every hour the same;
Whatever liquors might between them pass,
He took them all, and never balk'd his glass:
Nay, with the seamen working in the ship,
At their request, he'd share the grog and flip:
But in the club-room was his chief delight,
And punch the favourite liquor of the night;
Man after man they from the trial shrank,
And Dowling ever was the last who drank:
Arrived at home, he, ere he sought his bed,
With pipe and brandy would compose his head;
Then half an hour was o'er the news beguiled,
When he retired as harmless as a child.
Set but aside the gravel and the gout,
And breathing short—his sand ran fairly out.

"At fifty-five we lost him—after that
Life grows insipid and its pleasures flat;
He had indulged in all that man can have,
He did not drop a dotard to his grave:
Still to the last, his feet upon the chair,
With rattling lungs now gone beyond repair;
When on each feature death had fix'd his stamp
And not a doctor could the body vamp;
Still at the last, to his beloved bowl
He clung, and cheer'd the sadness of his soul;
For though a man may not have much to fear
Yet death looks ugly, when the view is near:
—'I go,' he said, 'but still my friends shall say
'T was as a man—I did not sneak away;
An honest life with worthy souls I've spent,—
Come fill my glass;'—he took it and he went.

"Poor Dolly Murray!—I might live to see
My hundredth year, but no such lass as she.
Easy by nature, in her humour gay,
She chose her comforts, ratafia and play:
She loved the social game, the decent glass;
And was a jovial, friendly, laughing lass,

We sat not then at Whist demure and still,
But pass'd the pleasant hours at gay Quadrille
Lame in her side, we placed her in her seat,
Her hands were free, she cared not for her feet;
As the game ended, came the glass around,
(So was the loser cheer'd, the winner crown'd.)
Mistress of secrets, both the young and old
In her confided—not a tale she told;
Love never made impression on her mind,
She held him weak, and all his captives blind:
She suffer'd no man her free soul to vex,
Free from the weakness of her gentle sex;
One with whom ours unmoved conversant sate,
In cool discussion or in free debate.

"Once in her chair we'd place the good old lass,
Where first she took her preparation-glass;
By lucky thought she'd been that day at prayers,
And long before had fix'd her small affairs;
So all was easy—on her cards she cast
A smiling look; I saw the thought that pass'd:
'A king,' she call'd—though conscious of her skill,
'Do more,' I answer'd—'More,' she said, 'I will;'
And more she did—cards answer'd to her call,
She saw the mighty to her mightier fall:
'A vole! a vole!' she cried' 't is fairly won,
My game is ended and my work is done;'—
This said, she gently, with a single sigh,
Died as one taught and practised how to die.

"Such were the dead-departed; I survive,
To breathe in pain among the dead-alive."

The bell then call'd these ancient men to pray,
"Again!" said Benbow,—"tolls it every day?
Where is the life I led?"—He sigh'd and walk'd his way

LETTER XVII.

THE HOSPITAL AND GOVERNORS.

Christian Charity anxious to provide for future as well as present Miseries—Hence the Hospital for the Diseased—Description of a recovered Patient—The Building: how erected—The Patrons and Governors—Eusebius—The more active Manager of Business, a moral and correct Contributor—One of different description—Good, the Result, however intermixed with Imperfection.

An ardent spirit dwells with Christian love,
The eagle's vigour in the pitying dove:
'T is not enough that we with sorrow sigh;
That we the wants of pleading man supply.
That we in sympathy with sufferers feel,
Nor hear a grief without a wish to heal:
Not these suffice—to sickness, pain, and woe,
The Christian spirit loves with aid to go:
Will not be sought, waits not for want to plead,
But seeks the duty—may, prevents the need;
Her utmost aid to every ill applies,
And plans relief for coming miseries.
  Hence yonder Building rose: on either side
Far stretch'd the wards, all airy, warm, and wide;
And every ward has beds by comfort spread,
And smooth'd for him who suffers on the bed:
There all have kindness, most relief,—for some
Is cure complete,—it is the sufferer's home:
Fevers and chronic ills, corroding pains,
Each accidental mischief man sustains;
Fractures and wounds, and wither'd limbs and lame,
With all that, slow or sudden, vex our frame,
Have here attendance—here the sufferers lie,
(Where love and science every aid apply,)
And heal'd with rapture live, or soothed by comfort die
  See! one relieved from anguish, and to-day
Allow'd to walk and look an hour away;
Two months confined by fever, frenzy, pain,
He comes abroad and is himself again:
'T was in the spring, when carried to the place,
The snow fell down and melted in his face.
  'T is summer now all objects gay and new,
Smiling alike the viewer and the view:

He stops as one unwilling to advance,
Without another and another glance:
With what a pure and simple joy he sees
Those sheep and cattle browzing at their ease;
Easy himself, there's nothing breathes or moves,
But he would cherish—all that lives he loves:
Observing every ward as round he goes,
He thinks what pain, what danger they enclose;
Warm in his wish for all who suffer there,
At every view he meditates a prayer·
No evil counsels in his breast abide,
There joy and love, and gratitude reside.

The wish that Roman necks in one were found
That he who form'd the wish might deal the wound
This man had never heard; but of the kind,
Is that desire which rises in his mind:
He 'd have all English hands (for further he
Cannot conceive extends our charity),
All but his own, in one right-hand to grow,
And then what hearty shake would he bestow
"How rose the building?"—Piety first laid
A strong foundation, but she wanted aid;
To wealth unwieldly was her prayer address'd,
Who largely gave, and she the donor bless'd:
Unwieldly wealth then to his couch withdrew
And took the sweetest sleep he ever knew.

Then busy vanity sustain'd her part,
'And much," she said, "it moved her tender heart:
To her all kinds of man's distress were known,
And all her heart adopted as its own."

Then science came—his talents he display'd,
And Charity with joy the dome survey'd,
Skill, wealth, and vanity, obtain the fame.
And piety, the joy that makes no claim.

Patrons there are, and Governors, from whom
The greater aid and guiding orders come:
Who voluntary cares and labours take,
The sufferers' servants for the service sake;
Of these a part I give you—but a part,—
Some hearts are hidden, some have not a heart.

First let me praise—for so I best shall paint
That pious moralist, that reasoning saint!
Can I of worth like thine, Eusebius, speak?
The man is willing, but the Muse is weak;—
'T is thine to wait on woe! to soothe! to heal!
With learning social, and polite with zeal:
In thy pure breast although the passions dwell,
They're train'd by virtue, and no more rebel;

But have so long been active on her side,
That passion now might be itself the guide.
Law, conscience, honour all obey'd, all give
Th' approving voice, and make it bliss to live;
While faith, when life can nothing more supply,
Shall strengthen hope, and make it bliss to die.
He preaches, speaks and writes with manly sense,
No weak neglect, no labour'd eloquence;
Goodness and wisdom are in all his ways,
The rude revere him and the wicked praise.
Upon humility his virtues grow,
And tower so high because so fix'd below;
As wider spreads the oak his boughs around,
When deeper with his roots he digs the solid ground.
By him, from ward to ward, is every aid
The sufferer needs, with every care convey'd:
Like the good tree he brings his treasures forth,
And, like the tree, unconscious of his worth.
Meek as the poorest Publican is he,
And strict as lives the straightest Pharisee;
Of both, in him unite the better part,
The blameless conduct and the humble heart.
Yet he escapes not: he, with some, is wise
In carnal things, and loves to moralize:
Others can doubt, if all that Christian care
Has not its price—there's something he may share;
But this and ill severer he sustains,
As gold the fire, and as unhurt remains:
When most reviled, although he feels the smart,
It wakes to nobler deeds the wounded heart,
As the rich olive, beaten for its fruit,
Puts forth at every bruise a bearing shoot.
A second Friend we have, whose care and zeal,
But few can equal—few indeed can feel;
He lived a life obscure, and profits made
In the coarse habits of a vulgar trade.
His brother, master of a boy, he loved
So well, that he the calling disapproved:
"Alas! poor Tom!" the landman oft would sigh,
When the gale freshen'd and the waves ran high;
And when they parted, with a tear he'd say,
"No more adventure!—here in safety stay."
Nor did he feign; with more than half he had,
He would have kept the seaman, and been glad.
Alas! how few resist, when strongly tried—
A rich relation's nearer kinsman died:
He sicken'd, and to him the landman went,
And all his hours with cousin Ephraim spent.

This Thomas heard, and cared not: "I," quoth he,
"Have one in port upon the watch for me.
So Ephraim died, and when the will was shown,
Isaac, the landman, had the whole his own:
Who to his brother sent a moderate purse,
Which he return'd, in anger, with his curse;
Then went to sea, and made his grog so strong,
He died before he could forgive the wrong.

The rich man built a house, both large and high,
He enter'd in and set him down to sigh:
He planted ample woods and gardens fair,
And walk'd with anguish and compunction there.
The rich man's pines, to every friend a treat,
He saw with pain, and he refused to eat;
His daintiest food, his richest wines, were all
Turn'd by remorse to vinegar and gall:
The softest down by living body press'd,
The rich man bought, and tried to take his rest;
But care had thorns upon his pillow spread,
And scatter'd sand and nettles in his bed:
Nervous he grew,—would often sigh and groan,
He talk'd but little, and he walk'd alone;
Till by his priest convinced, that from one deed
Of genuine love would joy and health proceed,
He from that time with care and zeal began
To seek and soothe the grievous ills of man;
And as his hands their aid to grief apply,
He learns to smile and he forgets to sigh.

Now he can drink his wine and taste his food,
And feel the blessings, Heav'n has dealt, are good,
And, since the suffering seek the rich man's door,
He sleeps as soundly as when young and poor.

Here much he gives—is urgent more to gain·
He begs—rich beggars seldom sue in vain:
Preachers most famed he moves, the crowd to move
And never wearies in the work of love:
He rules all business, settles all affairs,
He makes collections, he directs repairs;
And if he wrong'd one brother,—Heav'n forgive
The man by whom so many brethren live!

Then, 'mid our Signatures, a name appears,
Of one for wisdom famed above his years;
And these were forty: he was from his youth
A patient searcher after useful truth:
To language little of his time he gave,
To science less, nor was the Muse's slave;

Sober and grave, his college sent him down,
A fair example for his native town.
Slowly he speaks, and with such solemn air
You'd think a Socrates or Solon there;
For though a Christian, he's disposed to draw
His rules from reason's and from nature's law.
"Know," he exclaims, "my fellow mortals, know,
Virtue alone is happiness below:
And what is virtue? prudence first to choose
Life's real good,—the evil to refuse;
Add justice then, the eager hand to hold,
To curb the lust of power and thirst of gold;
Join temp'rance next, that cheerful health insures,
And fortitude unmoved, that conquers or endures."
He speaks, and lo!—the very man you see,
Prudent and temperate, just and patient he,
By prudence taught his worldly wealth to keep
No folly wastes, no avarice swells the heap:
He no man's debtor, no man's patron lives;
Save sound advice, he neither asks nor gives;
By no vain thoughts or erring fancy sway'd,
His words are weighty, or at least are weigh'd;
Temp'rate in every place—abroad, at home,
Thence will applause, and hence will profit come,
And health from either—he in time prepares
For sickness, age, and their attendant cares,
But not for fancy's ills,—he never grieves
For love that wounds or friendship that deceives.
His patient soul endures what Heav'n ordains,
But neither feels nor fears ideal pains.
"Is aught then wanted in a man so wise?"
Alas!—I think he wants infirmities.
He wants the ties that knit us to our kind—
The cheerful, tender, soft, complacent mind,
That would the feelings, which he dreads, excite,
And make the virtues he approves delight:
What dying martyrs, saints, and patriots feel,
The strength of action and the warmth of zeal.
Again attend!—and see a man whose cares
Are nicely placed on either world's affairs.—
Merchant and saint: 'tis doubtful if he knows
To which account he most regard bestows:
Of both he keeps his ledger:—there he reads
Of gainful ventures and of godly deeds;
There all he gets or loses finds a place,
A lucky bargain and a lack of grace.
The joys above this prudent man invite
To pay his tax—devotion!—day and night;

The pains of hell his timid bosom awe
And force obedience to the church's law:
Hence that continual thought,—that solemn air,
Those sad good works, and that laborious prayer.
All these (when conscience, waken'd and afraid,
To think how avarice calls and is obey'd,)
He in his journal finds, and for his grief
Obtains the transient opium of relief.
"Sink not, my soul!—my spirit, rise and look
O'er the fair entries of this precious book:
Here are the sins, our debts; this fairer side
Has what to carnal wish our strength denied;
Has those religious duties every day
Paid,—which so few upon the sabbath pay;
Here too are conquests over frail desires,
Attendance due on all the church requires;
Then alms I give—for I believe the word
Of holy writ, and lend unto the Lord,
And if not all th' importunate demand,
The fear of want restrains my ready hand.
—Behold! what sums I to the poor resign,
Sums placed in Heaven's own book, as well as mine
Rest then, my spirit!—fastings, prayers, and alms,
Will soon suppress these idly-raised alarms,
And weigh'd against our frailties, set in view
A noble balance in our favour due:
Add that I yearly here affix my name,
Pledge for large payment—not from love of fame,
But to make peace within:—that peace to make,
What sums I lavish! and what gains forsake!
Cheer up, my heart! let's cast off every doubt,
Pray without dread, and place our money out."
Such the religion of a mind that steers
Its way to bliss, between its hopes and fears;
Whose passions in due bounds each other keep,
And thus subdued, they murmur till they sleep;
Whose virtues all their certain limits know,
Like well dried herbs that neither fade nor grow;
Who for success and safety ever tries,
And with both worlds alternately complies.
Such are the guardians of this bless'd estate,
Whate'er without, they're praised within the gate
That they are men, and have their faults, is true
But here their worth alone appears in view:
The muse indeed, who reads the very breast,
Has something of the secrets there express'd,
But yet in charity;—and when she sees
Such means for joy or comfort, health or ease,

And knows how much united minds effect,
She almost dreads their failings to detect;
But Truth commands:—in man's erroneous kind,
Virtues and frailties mingle in the mind,
Happy!—when fears to public spirit move,
And even vices do the work of love.

LETTER XVIII.

THE POOR AND THEIR DWELLINGS.

The Method of treating the Borough Paupers—Many maintained at their own Dwellings—Some Characters of the Poor—The School-mistress, when aged—The Idiot—The poor Sailor—The declined Tradesman and his Companion—Thus contrasted with the Maintenance of the Poor in a common Mansion erected by the Hundred—The Objections to this Method: Not Want, nor Cruelty, but the necessary Evils of this Mode—What they are—Instances of the evil—A Return to the Borough Poor—The Dwellings of these—The Lanes and By-ways—No Attention here paid to Convenience—The Pools in the Path-ways—Amusements of Sea-port Children—The Town-Flora—Herbs on Walls and vacant Spaces—A Female Inhabitant of an Alley—A large Building let to several poor Inhabitants—Their Manners and Habits.

YES! we've our Borough-vices, and I know
How far they spread, how rapidly they grow;
Yet think not virtue quits the busy place,
Nor charity, the virtue's crown and grace.
"Our poor, how feed we?"—To the most we give
A weekly dole, and at their homes they live:—
Others together dwell,—but when they come
To the low roof, they see a kind of home,
A social people whom they've ever known,
With their own thoughts, and manners like their own.
At her old house, her dress, her air the same,
I see mine ancient Letter-loving dame:
"Learning, my child,' said she, "shall fame command;
Learning is better worth than house or land—
For houses perish, lands are gone and spent:
In learning then excel, for that's most excellent."
"And what her learning?"—'Tis with awe to look
In every verse throughout one sacred book;
From this her joy, her hope, her peace is sought;
This she has learned, and she is nobly taught.
If aught of mine have gain'd the public ear;
If RUTLAND deigns these humble Tales to hear

If critics pardon, what my friends approved;
Can I mine ancient Widow pass unmoved?
Shall I not think what pains the matron took,
When first I trembled o'er the gilded book?
How she, all patient, both at eve and morn,
Her needle pointed at the guarding horn,
And how she soothed me, when, with study sad,
I labour'd on to reach the final zad?
Shall I not grateful still the dame survey,
And ask the Muse the poet's debt to pay?
Nor I alone, who hold a trifler's pen,
But half our bench of wealthy, weighty men,
Who rule our Borough, who enforce our laws;
They own the matron as the leading cause,
And feel the pleasing debt, and pay the just applause
To her own house is borne the week's supply:
There she in credit lives, there hopes in peace to die.
With her a harmless Idiot we behold,
Who boards up silver shells for shining gold:
These he preserves with unremitted care,
To buy a seat, and reign the Borough's mayor:
Alas!—who could th' ambitious changeling tell,
That what he sought our rulers dared to sell?
Near these a Sailor, in that hut of thatch
(A fish-boat's cabin is its nearest match),
Dwells, and the dungeon is to him a seat,
Large as he wishes—in his view complete:
A lockless coffer and a lidless hutch
That hold his stores, have room for twice as much:
His one spare shirt, long glass, and iron box,
Lie all in view; no need has he for locks:
Here he abides, and, as our strangers pass,
He shows the shipping, he presents the glass;
He makes (unask'd) their ports and business known
And (kindly heard) turns quickly to his own,
Of noble captains, heroes every one.—
You might as soon have made the steeple run:
And then his messmates, if you're pleased to stay,
He'll one by one, the gallant souls display,
And as the story verges to an end,
He'll wind from deed to deed, from friend to friend:
He'll speak of those long lost, the brave of old,
As princes generous, and as heroes bold;
Then will his feelings rise, till you may trace
Gloom, like a cloud, from o'er his manly face,—
And then a tear or two, which sting his pride;
These he will dash indignantly aside,
And splice his tale;—now take him from his cot,
And for some cleaner berth exchange his lot,

How will he all that cruel aid deplore?
His heart will break, and he will fight no more.
Here is the poor old Merchant: he declined,
And, as they say, is not in perfect mind;
In his poor house, with one poor maiden friend,
Quiet he paces to his journey's end.
Rich in his youth, he traded and he fail'd;
Again he tried, again his fate prevail'd;
His spirits low, and his exertions small,
He fell perforce, he seem'd decreed to fall:
Like the gay knight unapt to rise was he,
But downward sank to sad alacrity.
A borough-place we gain'd him—in disgrace
For gross neglect, he quickly lost the place·
But still he kept a kind of sullen pride,
Striving his wants to hinder or to hide;
At length, compell'd by very need, in grief
He wrote a proud petition for relief.
"He did suppose a fall, like his, would prove
Of force to wake their sympathy and love;
Would make them feel the changes all may know,
And stir them up a due regard to show."
His suit was granted;—to an ancient maid,
Relieved herself, relief for him was paid:
Here they together (meet companions) dwell,
And dismal tales of man's misfortunes tell:
"'Twas not a world for them, God help them! they
Could not deceive, nor flatter, nor betray;
But there's a happy change, a scene to come,
And they, God help them! shall be soon at home."
If these no pleasures nor enjoyments gain,
Still none their spirits nor their speech restrain;
They sigh at ease, 'mid comforts they complain.
The poor will grieve, the poor will weep and sigh,
Both when they know, and when they know not why
But we our bounty with such care bestow,
That cause for grieving they shall seldom know.
Your Plan I love not;—with a number you
Have placed your poor, your pitiable few;
There, in one house throughout their lives to be,
The pauper-palace which they hate to see:
That giant-building, that high-bounding wall,
Those bare-worn walks, that lofty thund'ring hall!
That large loud clock, which tolls each dreaded hour,
Those gates and locks, and all those signs of power,
It is a prison with a milder name,
Which few inhabit without dread or shame.

Be it agreed—the Poor who hither come
Partake of plenty, seldom found at home;
That airy rooms and decent beds are meant
To give the poor by day, by night, content;
That none are frighten'd, once admitted here,
By the stern looks of lordly Overseer:
Grant that the Guardians of the place attend,
And ready ear to each petition lend;
That they desire the grieving poor to show
What ills they feel, what partial acts they know,
Not without promise, nay desire to heal
Each wrong they suffer, and each woe they feel.
Alas! their sorrows in their bosoms dwell;
They've much to suffer, but have naught to tell;
They have no evil in the place to state,
And dare not say, it is the house they hate:
They own there's granted all such place can give,
But live repining, for 't is there they live.
Grandsires are there, who now no more must see,
No more must nurse upon the trembling knee
The lost loved daughter's infant progeny:
Like death's dread mansion, this allows not place
For joyful meetings of a kindred race.
Is not the matron there, to whom the son
Was wont at each declining day to run;
He (when his toil was over) gave delight,
By lifting up the latch, and one "Good night?"
Yes, she is here; but nightly to her door
The son, still lab'ring, can return no more.
Widows are here, who in their huts were left,
Of husband's children, plenty, ease bereft;
Yet all that grief within the humble shed
Was soften'd, soften'd in the humble bed:
But here, in all its force, remains the grief,
And not one soft'ning object for relief.
Who can, when here, the social neighbour meet
Who learn the story current in the street?
Who to the long-known intimate impart
Facts they have learn'd or feelings of the heart?—
They talk indeed, but who can choose a friend,
Or seek companions at their journey's end?
Here are not those whom they, when infants knew,
Who, with like fortune, up to manhood grew;
Who, with like troubles, at old age arrived;
Who, like themselves, the joy of life survived;
Whom time and custom so familiar made,
That looks the meaning in the mind convey'd;

But here to strangers, words nor looks impart
The various movements of the suffering heart;
Nor will that heart with those alliance own,
To whom its views and hopes are all unknown.
What, if no grievous fears their lives annoy,
Is it not worse no prospects to enjoy?
'T is cheerless living in such bounded view,
With nothing dreadful, but with nothing new;
Nothing to bring them joy, to make them weep,—
The day itself is, like the night, asleep;
Or on the sameness if a break be made,
'T is by some pauper to his grave convey'd:
By smuggled news from neighb'ring village told,
News never true, or truth a twelvemonth old;
By some new inmate doom'd with them to dwell,
Or justice come to see that all goes well:
Or change of room, or hour of leave to crawl
On the black footway winding with the wall,
Till the stern bell forbids, or master's sterner call.
Here too the mother sees her children train'd,
Her voice excluded and her feelings pain'd:
Who govern here, by general rules must move,
Where ruthless custom rends the bond of love.
Nations we know have nature's law transgress'd,
And snatch'd the infant from the parent's breast;
But still for public good the boy was train'd,
The mother suffer'd but the matron gain'd:
Here nature's outrage serves no cause to aid;
The ill is felt, but not the Spartan made.
Then too I own, it grieves me to behold
Those ever virtuous, helpless now and old,
By all for care and industry approved,
For truth respected, and for temper loved;
And who, by sickness and misfortune tried,
Gave want its worth and poverty its pride:
I own it grieves me to behold them sent
From their old home; 't is pain, 't is punishment,
To leave each scene familiar, every face,
For a new people and a stranger race;
For those who, sunk in sloth and dead to shame,
From scenes of guilt with daring spirits came:
Men, just and guileless, at such manners start,
And bless their God that time has fenced their heart
Confirm'd their virtue, and expell'd the fear
Of vice in minds so simple and sincere.
Here the good pauper, losing all the praise
By worthy deeds acquired in better days,

Breathes a few months, then, to his chamber led
Expires, while strangers prattle round his bed.
The grateful hunter, when his horse is old,
Wills not the useless favourite to be sold;
He knows his former worth, and gives him place
In some fair pasture, till he runs his race:
But has the labourer, has the seaman done
Less worthy service, though not dealt to one?
Shall we not then contribute to their ease,
In their old haunts, where ancient objects please?
That, till their sight shall fail them, they may trace
The well-known prospect and the long-loved face.
The noble oak, in distant ages seen,
With far-stretched boughs and foliage fresh and green,
Though now its bare and forky branches show
How much it lacks the vital warmth below,
The stately ruin yet our wonder gains,
Nay, moves our pity, without thought of pains:
Much more shall real wants and cares of age
Our gentler passions in their cause engage:—
Drooping and burthen'd with a weight of years,
What venerable ruin man appears!
How worthy pity, love, respect, and grief—
He claims protection—he compels relief;—
And shall we send him from our view, to brave
The storms abroad, whom we at home might save,
And let a stranger dig our ancient brother's grave?
No!—we will shield him from the storm he fears,
And when he falls, embalm him with our tears.

Farewell to these; but all our poor to know,
Let's seek the winding lane, the narrow row
Suburban prospects, where the traveller stops
To see the sloping tenement on props,
With building-yards inmix'd, and humble sheds and shops
Where the Cross-Keys and Plumber's-Arms invite
Laborious men to taste their coarse delight;
Where the low porches, stretching from the door,
Gave some distinction in the days of yore,
Yet now neglected, more offend the eye,
By gloom and ruin, than the cottage by.
Places like these the noblest town endures,
The gayest palace has its sinks and sewers.
Here is no pavement, no inviting shop,
To give us shelter when compell'd to stop:
But plashy puddles stand along the way,
Fill'd by the rain of one tempestuous day,

And these so closely to the buildings run,
That you must ford them, for you cannot shun;
Though here and there convenient bricks are laid,
And door-sill heaps afford their dubious aid.
Lo! yonder shed; observe its garden-ground,
With the low paling, form'd of wreck, around:
There dwells a Fisher; if you view his boat,
With bed and barrel—'t is his house afloat;
Look at his house, where ropes, nets, blocks, abound,
Tar, pitch, and oakum—'t is his boat aground:
That space enclosed, but little he regards,
Spread o'er with relics of masts, sails, and yards:
Fish by the wall, on spit of elder, rest,
Of all his food, the cheapest and the best,
By his own labour caught, for his own hunger dress'd
Here our reformers come not; none object
To paths polluted, or upbraid neglect;
None care that ashy heaps at doors are cast,
That coal dust flies along the blinding blast:
None heed the stagnant pools on either side,
Where the new-launch'd ships of infant-sailors ride:
Rodneys in rags here British valour boast,
And lisping Nelsons fright the Gallic coast.
They fix the rudder, set the swelling sail,
They point the bowsprit, and they blow the gale:
True to her port, the frigate scuds away,
And o'er that frowning ocean finds her bay:
Her owner rigg'd her, and he knows her worth,
And sees her, fearless, gunwale-deep go forth;
Dreadless he views his sea, by breezes curl'd,
When inch-high billows vex the watery world.
There, fed by food they love, to rankest size,
Around the dwellings, docks and wormwood rise;
Here the strong mallow strikes her slimy root,
Here the dull nightshade hangs her deadly fruit;
On hills of dust the henbane's faded green,
And pencil'd flower of sickly scent is seen;
At the wall's base the fiery nettle springs,
With fruit globose and fierce with poison'd stings;
Above (the growth of many a year) is spread
The yellow level of the stone-crop's bed;
In every chink delights the fern to grow,
With glossy leaf and tawny bloom below:
These, with our sea-weeds, rolling up and down,
Form the contracted Flora of the town.
Say, wilt thou more of scenes so sordid know?
Then will I lead thee down the dusty Row;

By the warm alley and the long close lane,—
There mark the fractured door and paper'd pane,
Where flags the noon-tide air, and, as we pass,
We fear to breathe the putrefying mass:
But fearless yonder matron: she disdains
To sigh for zephyrs from ambrosial plains;
But mends her meshes torn, and pours her lay
All in the stifling fervour of the day.
Her naked children round the alley run,
And roll'd in dust, are bronzed beneath the sun;
Or gambol round the dame, who loosely dress'd,
Woos the coy breeze to fan the open breast:
She, once a handmaid, strove by decent art
To charm her sailor's eye and touch his heart;
Her bosom then was veil'd in kerchief clean,
And fancy left to form the charms unseen.
But when a wife, she lost her former care,
Nor thought on charms, nor time for dress could spare
Careless she found her friends who dwelt beside,
No rival beauty kept alive her pride.
Still in her bosom virtue keeps her place,
But decency is gone, the virtue's guard and grace.
See that long boarded Building!—By these stairs
Each humble tenant to that home repairs—
By one large window lighted—it was made
For some bold project, some design in trade:
This fail'd,—and one, a humourist in his way,
(Ill was the humour,) bought it in decay;
Nor will he sell, repair, or take it down;
'T is his,—what cares he for the talk of town?
"No! he will let it to the poor;—a home
Where he delights to see the creatures come:"
"They may be thieves;"—"Well so are richer men;"
"Or idlers, cheats, or prostitutes;"—"What then?"
"Outcasts pursued by justice, vile and base;"
"They need the more his pity and the place:"
Convert to system his vain mind has built,
He gives asylum to deceit and guilt.
In this vast room, each place by habit fix'd,
Are sexes, families, and ages mix'd—
To union forced by crime, by fear, by need,
And all in morals and in modes agreed,
Some ruin'd men, who from mankind remove;
Some ruin'd females, who yet talk of love;
And some grown old in idleness—the prey
To vicious spleen, still railing through the day,
And need and misery, vice and danger bind
In sad alliance each degraded mind.

That window view!—oil'd paper and old glass
Stain the strong rays, which, though impeded, pass,
And give a dusty warmth to that huge room,
The conquer'd sunshine's melancholy gloom;
When all those western rays, without so bright,
Within become a ghastly glimmering light,
As pale and faint upon the floor they fall,
Or feebly gleam on the opposing wall:
That floor, once oak, now pieced with fir unplaned
Or, where not pieced, in places bored and stain'd;
That wall once whiten'd, now an odious sight,
Stain'd with all hues, except its ancient white;
The only door is fasten'd by a pin,
Or stubborn bar, that none may hurry in:
For this poor room, like rooms of greater pride,
At times contains what prudent men would hide.

Where'er the floor allows an even space,
Chalking and marks of various games have place;
Boys, without foresight, pleased in halters swing;
On a fix'd hook men cast a flying ring;
While gin and snuff their female neighbours share,
And the black beverage in the fractured ware.

On swinging shelf are things incongruous stored,—
Scraps of their food,—the cards and cribbage-board,—
With pipes and pouches; while on peg below,
Hang a lost member's fiddle and its bow:
That still reminds them how he'd dance and play,
Ere sent untimely to the Convicts' Bay.
Here by a curtain, by a blanket there,
Are various beds conceal'd, but none with care;
Where some by day and some by night, as best
Suit their employments, seek uncertain rest;
The drowsy children at their pleasure creep
To the known crib, and there securely sleep.

Each end contains a grate, and these beside
Are hung utensils for their boil'd and fried—
All used at any hour, by night, by day,
As suit the purse, the person or the prey.

Above the fire, the mantel-shelf contains
Of china-ware some poor unmatch'd remains;
There many a tea-cup's gaudy fragment stands,
All placed by vanity's unwearied hands;
For here she lives, e'en here she looks about,
To find some small consoling objects out:
Nor heed these Spartan dames their house, not sit
'Mid cares domestic,—they nor sew nor knit:
But of their fate discourse, their ways, their wars,
With arm'd authorities, their 'scapes and scars:

These lead to present evils, and a cup,
If fortune grant it, winds description up.
High hung up at either end, and next the wall,
Two ancient mirrors show the forms of all,
In all their force;—these aid them in their dress,
But with the good, the evils too express,
Doubling each look of care, each token of distress.

LETTER XIX.

THE POOR OF THE BOROUGH.

THE PARISH CLERK.

The Parish-Clerk began his Duties with the late Vicar, a grave and austere Man; one fully orthodox; a Detecter and Opposer of the Wiles of Satan—His opinion of his own Fortitude—More frail offended by these Professions—His good Master gives further Provocation—They invent Stratagems to overcome his Virtue—His Triumph—He is not yet invulnerable: is assaulted by Fear of Want, and Avarice—He gradually yields to the Seduction—He reasons with himself, and is persuaded—He offends, but with Terror; repeats his Offence; grows familiar with Crime, is detected—His sufferings and Death.

With our late Vicar, and his age the same,
His Clerk, hight *Jachin*, to his office came:
The like slow speech was his, the like tall tender frame:
But Jachin was the gravest man on ground,
And heard his master's jokes with look profound;
For worldly wealth this man of letters sigh'd,
And had a sprinkling of the spirit's pride:
But he was sober, chaste, devout, and just,
One whom his neighbours could believe and trust:
Of none suspected, neither man nor maid
By him were wrong'd, or were of him afraid.
There was indeed a frown, a trick of state
In Jachin;—formal was his air and gait:
But if he seem'd more solemn and less kind,
Than some light men to light affairs confined,
Still 't was allow'd that he should so behave,
As in high seat, and be severely grave.
This book-taught man, to man's first foe profess'd
Defiance stern, and hate that knew not rest;
He held that Satan, since the world began,
In every act had strife with every man;

That never evil deed on earth was done,
But of the acting parties he was one;
The flattering guide to make ill prospects clear;
To smooth rough ways the constant pioneer;
The ever-tempting, soothing, softening power,
Ready to cheat, seduce, deceive, devour.
Me has the sly Seducer oft withstood,"
Said pious Jachin,—"but he gets no good;
I pass the house where swings the tempting sign,
And pointing, tell him, 'Satan, that is thine.'
I pass the damsels pacing down the street,
And look more grave and solemn when we meet;
Nor doth it irk me to rebuke their smiles,
Their wanton ambling and their watchful wiles:
Nay, like the good John Bunyan, when I view
Those forms, I'm angry at the ills they do;
That I could pinch and spoil, in sin's despite,
Beauties! which frail and evil thoughts excite.
"At feasts and banquets seldom am I found,
And (save at church) abhor a tuneful sound;
To plays and shows I run not to and fro,
And where my master goes, forbear to go."
No wonder Satan took the thing amiss,
To be opposed by such a man as this—
A man so grave, important, cautious, wise,
Who dared not trust his feeling or his eyes;
No wonder he should lurk and lie in wait,
Should fit his hooks and ponder on the bait,
Should on his movements keep a watchful eye,
For he pursued a fish who led the fry.
With his own peace our Clerk was not content,
He tried, good man! to make his friends repent.
"Nay, nay, my friends, from inns and taverns fly;
You may suppress your thirst, but not supply:
A foolish proverb says, 'the devil's at home;'
But he is there, and tempts in every room:
Men feel, they know not why, such places please:
His are the spells—they're idleness and ease;
Magic of fatal kind he throws around,
Where care is banish'd, but the heart is bound.
"Think not of Beauty;—when a maid you meet,
Turn from her view and step across the street;
Dread all the sex: their looks create a charm,
A smile should fright you and a word alarm:
E'en I myself, with all my watchful care,
Have for an instant felt th' insidious snare:
And caught my sinful eyes at th' endangering stare,
Till I was forced to smite my bounding breast
With forceful blow, and bid the bold-one rest.

"Go not with crowds when they to pleasure run,
But public joy in private safety shun:
When bells, diverted from their true intent,
Ring loud for some deluded mortal sent
To hear or make long speech in parliament:
What time the many, that unruly beast,
Roars its rough joy and shares the final feast:
Then heed my counsel, shut thine ears and eyes;
A few will hear me—for the few are wise."
Not Satan's friends, nor Satan's self could bear
The cautious man who took of souls such care;
An interloper,—one who, out of place,
Had volunteer'd upon the side of grace:
There was his master ready once a week
To give advice; what further need he seek?
"Amen, so be it:"—what had he to do
With more than this?—'t was insolent and new;
And some determined on a way to see
How frail he was, that so it might not be.
First they essay'd to tempt our saint to sin,
By points of doctrine argued at an inn;
Where he might warmly reason, deeply drink,
Then lose all power to argue and to think.
In vain they tried; he took the question up,
Clear'd every doubt, and barely touch'd the cup
By many a text he proved his doctrine sound,
And look'd in triumph on the tempters round.
Next 't was their care an artful lass to find,
Who might consult him, as perplex'd in mind;
She they conceived might put her case with fears
With tender tremblings and seducing tears;
She might such charms of various kind display,
That he would feel their force and melt away:
For why of nymphs such caution and such dread,
Unless he felt, and fear'd to be misled?
She came, she spake: he calmly heard her case
And plainly told her 't was a want of grace;
Bade her "such fancies and affections check,
And wear a thicker muslin on her neck."
Abased, his human foes the combat fled,
And the stern clerk yet higher held his head.
They were indeed a weak, impatient set,
But their shrewd prompter had his engines yet:
Had various means to make a mortal trip,
Who shunn'd a flowing bowl and rosy lip;
And knew a thousand ways his heart to move,
Who flies from banquets and who laughs at love.
Thus far the playful Muse has lent her aid,
But now departs, of graver theme afraid;

Her may we seek in more appropriate time,—
There is no jesting with distress and crime.

Our worthy Clerk had now arrived at fame,
Such as but few in his degree might claim;
But he was poor, and wanted not the sense
That lowly rates the praise without the pence:
He saw the common herd with reverence treat,
The weakest burgess whom they chanced to meet;
While few respected his exalted views,
And all beheld his doublet and his shoes:
None, when they meet, would to his parts allow
(Save his poor boys) a hearing or a bow:
To this false judgment of the vulgar mind,
He was not fully, as a saint, resign'd:
He found it much his jealous soul affect,
To fear derision and to find neglect.

The year was bad, the christening fees were small,
The weddings few, the parties paupers all:
Desire of gain with fear of want combined,
Raised sad commotion in his wounded mind;
Wealth was in all his thoughts, his views, his dreams,
And prompted base desires and baseless schemes.

Alas! how often erring mortals keep
The strongest watch against the foes who sleep;
While the more wakeful, bold and artful foe
Is suffer'd guardless and unmark'd to go.

Once in a month the sacramental bread
Our Clerk with wine upon the table spread:
The custom this, that, as the vicar reads,
He for our off'rings round the church proceeds:
Tall spacious seats the wealthier people hid,
And none had view of what his neighbour did:
Laid on the box and mingled when they fell,
Who should the worth of each oblation tell?
Now as poor Jachin took the usual round,
And saw the alms and heard the metal sound,
He had a thought—at first it was no more
Than—"these have cash and give it to the poor."
A second thought from this to work began—
"And can they give it to a poorer man?"
Proceeding thus,—"My merit could they know,
And knew my need, how freely they'd bestow;
But though they know not, these remain the same,
And are a strong, although a secret claim:
To me, alas! the want and worth are known,
Why then, in fact, 'tis but to take my own."

Thought after thought pour'd in, a tempting train
"Suppose it done,—who is it could complain?

How could the poor? for they such trifles share,
As add no comfort, as suppress no care;
But many a pittance makes a worthy heap,—
What says the law? that silence puts to sleep:—
Nought then forbids, the danger could we shun,
And sure the business may be safely done.
"But am I earnest?—earnest? No.—I say,
If such my mind, that I could plan a way;
Let me reflect;—I've not allow'd me time
To purse the pieces, and if dropp'd they'd chime:"
Fertile is evil in the soul of man,—
He paused,—said Jachin, "They may drop in bran.
Why then 't is safe and (all consider'd) just,
The poor receive it,—'t is no breach of trust:
The old and widows may their trifles miss,
There must be evil in a good like this:
But I'll be kind—the sick I'll visit twice,
When now but once, and freely give advice.
Yet let me think again:"—Again he tried,
For stronger reasons on his passion's side,
And quickly these were found, yet slowly he complied.
The morning came: the common service done,
Shut every door,—the solemn rite begun,—
And, as the priest the sacred sayings read,
The clerk went forward, trembling as he tread:
O'er the tall pew he held the box, and heard,
The offer'd piece, rejoicing as he fear'd:
Just by the pillar, as he cautious tripp'd,
And turn'd the aisle, he then a portion slipp'd
From the full store, and to the pocket sent,
But held a moment—and then down it went.
The priest read on, on walk'd the man afraid,
Till a gold offering in the plate was laid;
Trembling he took it, for a moment stopp'd,
Then down it fell, and sounded as it dropp'd;
Amazed he started, for the affrighted man,
Lost and bewilder'd, thought not of the bran.
But all were silent, all on things intent,
Of high concern, none ear to money lent:
So on he walk'd more cautious than before,
And gain'd the purposed sum and one piece more.
"Practice makes perfect:" when the month came round,
He dropp'd the cash, nor listen'd for a sound;
But yet, when last of all th' assembled flock
He ate and drank,—it gave th' electric shock:
Oft was he forced his reasons to repeat,
Ere he could kneel in quiet at his seat;
But custom soothed him—ere a single year
All this was done without restraint or fear.

Cool and collected, easy and composed,
He was correct till all the service closed;
Then to his home, without a groan or sigh,
Gravely he went, and laid his treasure by.
Want will complain: some widows had express'd
A doubt if they were favour'd like the rest;
The rest described with like regret their dole,
And thus from parts they reason'd to the whole:
When all agreed some evil must be done,
Or rich men's hearts grew harder than a stone.
Our easy vicar cut the matter short;
He would not listen to such vile report.
All were not thus—there govern'd in that year
A stern stout churl, an angry overseer:
A tyrant fond of power, loud, lewd, and most severe
Him the mild vicar, him the graver clerk,
Advised, reproved, but nothing would he mark,
Save the disgrace, "and that, my friends," said he,
"Will I avenge, whenever time may be."
And now, alas! 'twas time;—from man to man
Doubt and alarm and shrewd suspicions ran.
With angry spirit and with sly intent,
This parish ruler to the altar went:
A private mark he fix'd on shillings three.
And but one mark could in the money see;
Besides, in peering round, he chanced to note
A sprinkling slight on Juchin's Sunday-coat:
All doubt was over:—when the flock were bless'd,
In wrath he rose, and thus his mind express'd.
"Foul deeds are here!" and saying this he took
The Clerk, whose conscience in her cold-fit, shook:
His pocket then was emptied on the place;
All saw his guilt; all witness'd his disgrace:
He fell, he fainted, not a groan, a look,
Escaped the culprit; 'twas a final stroke—
A death-wound never to be heal'd—a fall
That all had witness'd, and amazed were all.
As he recover'd, to his mind it came,
"I owe to Satan this disgrace and shame:"
All the seductien now appear'd in view;
"Let me withdraw," he said, and he withdrew
No one withheld him, all in union cried,
Even the avenger,—"We are satisfied;
For what has death in any form to give,
Equal to that man's terrors, if he live?"
He lived in freedom, but he hourly saw
How much more fatal justice is than law;

He saw another in his office reign,
And his mild master treat him with disdain:
He saw that all men shunn'd him, some reviled,
The harsh pass'd frowning, and the simple smiled;
The town maintain'd him, but with some reproof
"And clerks and scholars proudly kept aloof."
In each lone place, dejected and dismay'd,
Shrinking from view, his wasting form he laid;
Or to the restless sea and roaring wind
Gave the strong yearnings of a ruin'd mind:
On the broad beach, the silent summer-day,
Stretch'd on some wreck, he wore his life away;
Or where the river mingles with the sea,
Or on the mud bank by the elder tree,
Or by the bounding marsh-dyke, there was he:
And when unable to forsake the town,
In the blind courts he sate desponding down—
Always alone; then feebly would he crawl
The church-way walk, and lean upon the wall;
Too ill for this, he lay beside the door,
Compell'd to hear the reasoning of the poor:
He look'd so pale, so weak, the pitying crowd
Their firm belief of his repentance vow'd:
They saw him then so ghastly and so thin,
That they exclaim'd, "Is this the work of sin?"
"Yes," in his better moments he replied,
"Of sinful avarice and the spirit's pride:—
While yet untempted, I was safe and well;
Temptation came; I reason'd, and I fell:
To be man's guide and glory I design'd
A rare example for our sinful kind;
But now my weakness and my guilt I see,
And am a warning—man, be warn'd by me!"
He said, and saw no more the human face;
To a lone loft he went, his dying place,
And, as the vicar of his state inquired,
Turn'd to the wall and silently expired!

LETTER XX.

THE POOR OF THE BOROUGH:

ELLEN ORFORD.

The Widow's Cottage—Blind Ellen one—Hers not the Sorrows or Adventures of Heroines—What these are, first described—Deserted Wives; rash Lovers; courageous Damsels; in desolated Mansions; in grievous Perplexity—These Evils, however severe, of short duration—Ellen's Story—Her Employment in Childhood—First Love; first Adventure; its miserable Termination—An Idiot Daughter—A Husband—Care in Business without success—The man's Despondency and its Effect—Their Children: how disposed of—One particularly unfortunate—Fate of the Daughter—Ellen keeps a School and is happy—Becomes blind: loses her School—Her Consolations.

OBSERVE yon tenement, apart and small,
Where the wet pebbles shine upon the wall;
Where the low benches lean beside the door,
And the red paling bounds the space before;
Where thrift and lavender, and lad's-love bloom,—
That humble dwelling in the widow's home;
There live a pair, for various fortunes known,
But the blind *Ellen* will relate her own:—
Yet ere we hear the story she can tell,
On prouder sorrows let us briefly dwell.

I've often marvell'd, when, by night, by day
I've mark'd the manners moving in my way,
And heard the language and beheld the lives
Of lass and lover, goddesses and wives,
That books, which promise much of life to give,
Should show so little how we truly live.

To me it seems, their females and their men
Are but the creatures of the author's pen:
Nay, creatures borrow'd and again convey'd
From book to book—the shadows of a shade!
Life, if they search, would show them many a change;
The ruin sudden, and the misery strange!
With more of grievous, base, and dreadful things,
Than novelists relate or poet sings:
But they, who ought to look the world around,
Spy out a single spot in fairy-ground;
Where all, in turn, ideal forms behold,
And plots are laid and histories are told.

Time have I lent—I would the debt were less—
To flow'ry pages of sublime distress;
And to the heroine's soul-distracting fears
I early gave my sixpences and tears:
Oft have I travell'd in these tender tales,
To *Darnley-Cottages* and *Maple-Vales*,
And watch'd the fair-one from the first-born sigh,
When Henry pass'd and gazed in passing by;
Till I beheld them pacing in the park,
Close by a coppice where 't was cold and dark;
When such affection with such fate appear'd,
Want and a father to be shunn'd and fear'd,
Without employment, prospect, cot or cash;
That I have judged th' heroic souls were rash.

Now shifts the scene,—the fair in tower confined,
In all things suffers, but in change of mind;
Now woo'd by greatness to a bed of state,
Now deeply threaten'd with a dungeon's grate;
Till suffering much, and being tried enough,
She shines, triumphant maid!—temptation-proof.

Then was I led to vengeful monks, who mix
With nymphs and swains, and play unpriestly tricks
Then view'd banditti, who in forest wide,
And cavern vast, indignant virgins hide;
Who, hemm'd with bands of sturdiest rogues about,
Find some strange succour, and come virgins out.

I've watch'd a wintry night on castle-walls,
I've stalk'd by moonlight through deserted halls,
And when the weary world was sunk to rest,
I've had such sights as—may not be express'd.

Lo! that château, the western tower decay'd,
The peasants shun it,—they are all afraid;
For there was done a deed!—could walls reveal,
Or timbers tell it, how the heart would feel!
Most horrid was it.—for, behold, the floor
Has stain of blood, and will be clean no more:
Hark to the winds! which through the wide saloon
And the long passage send a dismal tune,—
Music that ghosts delight in;—and now heed
Yon beauteous nymph, who must unmask the deed;
See! with majestic sweep she swims alone,
Through rooms, all dreary, guided by a groan:
Though windows rattle, and though tap'stries shake
And the feet falter every step they take,
'Mid moans and gibing sprights she silent goes,
To find a something, which will soon expose
The villanies and wiles of her determined foes:
And, having thus adventured, thus endured,
Fame, wealth, and lover are for life secured.

Much have I fear'd,—but am no more afraid,
When some chaste beauty, by some wretch betray'd,
Is drawn away with such distracted speed,
That she anticipates a dreadful deed:
Not so do I—Let solid walls impound
The captive fair, and dig a moat around;
Let there be brazen locks and bars of steel,
And keepers cruel, such as never feel;
With not a single note the purse supply,
And when she begs, let men and maids deny;
Be windows those from which she dares not fall
And help so distant 'tis in vain to call:
Still means of freedom will some power devise,
And from the baffled ruffian snatch his prize.

To Northern Wales, in some sequester'd spot,
I've follow'd fair *Louisa* to her cot;
Where, then a wretched and deserted bride,
The injur'd fair-one wished from man to hide;
Till by her fond repenting Belville found,
By some kind chance—the straying of a hound,
He at her feet craved mercy, nor in vain,
For the relenting dove flew back again.

There's something rapturous in distress, or, oh!
Could *Clementina* bear her lot of woe?
Or what she underwent could maiden undergo?
The day was fix'd; for so the lover sigh'd,
So knelt and craved, he could n't be denied;
When, tale most dreadful! every hope adieu,—
For the fond lover is the brother too:
All other griefs abate; this monstrous grief
Has no remission, comfort, or relief;
Four ample volumes, through each page disclose,—
Good Heaven protect us! only woes on woes;
Till some strange means afford a sudden view
Of some vile plot, and every woe adieu!

Now, should we grant these beauties all endure
Severest pangs, they've still the speediest cure;
Before one charm be wither'd from the face,
Except the bloom, which shall again have place,
In wedlock ends each wish, in triumph all disgrace;
And life to come, we fairly may suppose,
One light, bright contrast to these wild dark woes.
These let us leave, and at her sorrows look,
Too often seen but seldom in a book;
Let her who felt, relate them; on her chair
The heroine sits—in former years, the fair.
Now aged and poor; but *Ellen Orford* knows
That we should humbly take what Heav'n bestows.

"My father died—again my mother wed,
And found the comforts of her life were fled;
Her angry husband, vex'd through half his years
By loss and troubles, fill'd her soul with fears:
Their children many, and 't was my poor place
To nurse and wait on all the infant-race;
Labour and hunger were indeed my part,
And should have strengthen'd an erroneous heart.

"Sore was the grief to see him angry come,
And teased with business, make distress at home:
The father's fury and the children's cries
I soon could bear, but not my mother's sighs;
For she look'd back on comforts, and would say,
'I wrong'd thee, Ellen,' and then turn away:
Thus for my age's good, my youth was tried,
And this my fortune till my mother died.

"So, amid sorrow much and little cheer—
A common case—I pass'd my twentieth year;
For these are frequent evils; thousands share
An equal grief—the like domestic care

"Then in my days of bloom, of health and youth,
One, much above me, vow'd his love and truth:
We often met, he dreading to be seen,
And much I question'd what such dread might mean.
Yet I believed him true; my simple heart
And undirected reason took his part.

"Can he who loves me, whom I love, deceive?
Can I such wrong of one so kind believe,
Who lives but in my smile, who trembles when I grieve?

"He dared not marry, but we met to prove
What sad encroachments and deceits has love:
Weak that I was when he, rebuked withdrew,
I let him see that I was wretched too:
When less the caution, I had still the pain
Of his or mine own weakness to complain.

"Happy the lovers class'd alike in life,
Or happier yet the rich endowing wife;
But most aggrieved the fond believing maid,
Of her rich lover tenderly afraid:
You judge th' event; for grievous was my fate,
Painful to feel, and shameful to relate:
Ah! sad it was my burthen to sustain,
When the least misery was the dread of pain;
When I have grieving told him my disgrace,
And plainly mark'd indifference in his face.

"Hard! with these fears and terrors to behold
The cause of all, the faithless lover, cold:
Impatient grown at every wish denied,
And barely civil, soothed and gratified:

Peevish when urged to think of vows so strong,
And angry when I spake of crime and wrong.
All this I felt, and still the sorrow grew,
Because I felt that I deserved it too,
And begg'd my infant stranger to forgive
The mother's shame, which in herself must live.
When known that shame, I, soon expell'd from home
With a frail sister shared a hovel's gloom;
There barely fed—(what could I more request?)
My infant slumberer sleeping at my breast,
I from my window saw his blooming bride,
And my seducer smiling at her side;
Hope lived till then: I sank upon the floor,
And grief and thought and feeling were no more.
Although revived, I judged that life would close,
And went to rest, to wonder that I rose:
My dreams were dismal,—wheresoe'er I stray'd,
I seem'd ashamed, alarm'd, despised, betray'd,
Always in grief, in guilt, disgraced, forlorn,
Mourning that one so weak, so vile, was born;
The earth a desert, tumult in the sea,
The birds affrighten'd fled from tree to tree,
Obscured the setting sun, and every thing like me:
But Heaven had mercy, and my need at length
Urged me to labour, and renew'd my strength.
I strove for patience as a sinner must,
Yet felt th' opinion of the world unjust:
There was my lover, in his joy esteem'd,
And I, in my distress, as guilty deem'd;
Yet sure, not all the guilt and shame belong
To her who feels and suffers for the wrong:
The cheat at play may use the wealth he's won,
But is not honour'd for the mischief done:
The cheat in love may use each villain art,
And boast the deed that breaks the victim's heart.

"Four years were past; I might again have found
Some erring wish, but for another wound:
Lovely my daughter grew, her face was fair,
But no expression ever brighten'd there;
I doubted long, and vainly strove to make
Some certain meaning of the words she spake;
But meaning there was none, and I survey'd
With dread the beauties of my idiot-maid.
Still I submitted:—Oh! 't is meet and fit
In all we feel to make the heart submit:
Gloomy and calm my days, but I had then,
It seem'd, attractions for the eyes of men:
The sober master of a decent trade
O'erlook'd my errors, and his offer made;

Reason assented.—true, my heart denied,
'But thou,' I said, 'shalt be no more my guide.'
" When wed, our toil and trouble, pains and care,
Of means to live procured us humble share;
Five were our sons,—and we, though careful found
Our hopes declining as the year came round:
For I perceived, yet would not soon perceive,
My husband stealing from my view to grieve:
Silent he grew, and when he spoke he sigh'd,
And surly look'd, and peevishly replied:
Pensive by nature, he had gone of late
To those who preach'd of destiny and fate,
Of things fore-doom'd, and of election-grace,
And how in vain we strive to run our race;
That all by works and moral worth we gain
Is to perceive our care and labour vain:
That still the more we pay, our debts the more remain;
That he who feels not the mysterious call,
Lies bound in sin, still grov'ling from the fall.
My husband felt not:—our persuasion, prayer,
And our best reason, darken'd his despair:
His very nature changed; he now reviled
My former conduct,—he reproach'd my child:
He talk'd of bastard slips, and cursed his bed,
And from our kindness to concealment fled;
For ever to some evil change inclined,
To every gloomy thought he lent his mind
Nor rest would give to us, nor rest himself could find
His son suspended saw him, long bereft
Of life, nor prospect of revival left.
" With him died all our prospects, and once more
I shared th' allotments of the parish poor.
They took my children too, and this I know,
Was just and lawful, but I felt the blow:
My idiot-maid and one unhealthy boy
Were left, a mother's misery and her joy.
" Three sons I follow'd to the grave, and one—
Oh! can I speak of that unhappy son?
Would all the memory of that time were fled
And all those horrors, with my child, were dead!
Before the world seduced him, what a grace
And smile of gladness shone upon his face!
Then, he had knowledge; finely would he write;
Study to him was pleasure and delight;
Great was his courage, and but few could stand
Against the sleight and vigour of his hand:
The maidens loved him:—when he came to die,
No, not the coldest could suppress a sigh:

Here I must cease—how can I say, my child
Was by the bad of either sex beguiled?
Worst of the bad—they taught him that the laws
Made wrong and right; there was no other cause,
That all religion was the trade of priests,
And men, when dead, must perish like the beasts:—
And he, so lively and so gay before——
Ah! spare a mother—I can tell no more.

"Int'rest was made that they should not destroy
The comely form of my deluded boy—
But pardon came not; damp the place and deep
Where he was kept, as they'd a tiger keep;
For he, unhappy! had before them all
Vow'd he 'd escape, whatever might befall.

"He 'd means of dress, and dress'd beyond his means
And so to see him in such dismal scenes,
I cannot speak it—cannot bear to tell
Of that sad hour—I heard the passing bell!

"Slowly they went; he smiled, and look'd so smart:
Yet sure he shudder'd when he saw the cart,
And gave a look—until my dying day,
That look will never from my mind away:
Oft as I sit, and ever in my dreams,
I see that look, and they have heard my screams.

"Now let me speak no more—yet all declared
That one so young, in pity, should be spared,
And one so manly;—on his graceful neck,
That chains of jewels may be proud to deck,
To a small mole a mother's lips have press'd,—
And there the cord—my breath is sore oppress'd.

"I now can speak again:—my elder boy
Was that year drown'd,—a seaman in a hoy:
He left a numerous race; of these would some,
In their young troubles to my cottage come,
And these I taught—an humble teacher I—
Upon their heavenly Parent to rely.

"Alas! I needed such reliance more:
My idiot-girl, so simply gay before,
Now wept in pain; some wretch had found a time
Depraved and wicked, for that coward-crime;
I had indeed my doubt, but I suppress'd
The thought that day and night disturb'd my rest.
She and that sick-pale brother—but why strive
To keep the terrors of that time alive?

"The hour arrived, the new, th' undreaded pain
That came with violence, and yet came in vain.
I saw her die: her brother too is dead:
Nor own'd such crime—what is it that I dread?

"The parish aid withdrawn, I look'd around,
And in my school a bless'd subsistence found—
My winter calm of life; to be of use
Would pleasant thoughts and heavenly hopes produce;
I loved them all; it soothed me to presage
The various trials of their riper age,
Then dwell on mine, and bless the Power who gave
Pains to correct us, and remorse to save.

"Yes! these were days of peace, but they are past,—
A trial came, I will believe, a last;
I lost my sight, and my employment gone.
Useless I live, but to the day live on;
Those eyes, which long the light of heaven enjoy'd
Were not by pain, by agony destroy'd:
My senses fail not all; I speak, I pray;
By night my rest, my food I take by day;
And, as my mind looks cheerful to my end,
I love mankind, and call my GOD my friend."

LETTER XXI.

THE POOR OF THE BOROUGH

ABEL KEENE.

Abel, a poor Man, Teacher of a School of the lower Order; is placed in the Office of a Merchant; is alarmed by Discourses of the Clerks; unable to reply; becomes a Convert; dresses, drinks, and ridicules his former Conduct—The Remonstrance of his Sister, a devout Maiden—Its Effect—The Merchant dies—Abel returns to Poverty unpitied; but relieved—His abject Condition—His Melancholy—He wanders about; is found—His own account of himself, and the Revolutions in his Mind.

A QUIET, simple man was *Abel Keene*,
He meant no harm, nor did he often mean:
He kept a school of loud rebellious boys,
And growing old, grew nervous with the noise;
When a kind Merchant hired his useful pen,
And made him happiest of accompting men;
With glee he rose to every easy day,
When half the labour brought him twice the pay.

There were young clerks, and there the merchant's son,
Choice spirits all, who wish'd him to be one;
It must, no question, give them lively joy,
Hopes long indulged to combat and destroy;

At these they levell'd all their skill and strength,—
He fell not quickly, but he fell at length:
They quoted books, to him both bold and new,
And scorn'd as fables all he held as true;
"Such monkish stories, and such nursery lies,"
That he was struck with terror and surprise.
"What! all his life had he the laws obey'd,
Which they broke through, and were not once afraid?
Had he so long his evil passions check'd,
And yet at last had nothing to expect?
While they their lives in joy and pleasure led,
And then had nothing, at the end, to dread?
Was all his priest with so much zeal convey'd,
A part! a speech! for which the man was paid?
And were his pious books, his solemn prayers,
Not worth one tale of the admired Voltaire's?
Then was it time, while yet some years remain'd,
To drink untroubled and to think unchain'd,
And on all pleasures, which his purse could give,
Freely to seize, and while he lived, to live."
Much time he pass'd in this important strife,
The bliss or bane of his remaining life:
For converts all are made with care and grief,
And pangs attend the birth of unbelief;
Nor pass they soon:—with awe and fear he took
The flowery way, and cast back many a look.
The youths applauded much his wise design,
With weighty reasoning o'er their evening wine:
And much in private 't would their mirth improve,
To hear how Abel spake of life and love;
To hear him own what grievous pains it cost,
Ere the old saint was in the sinner lost,
Ere his poor mind, with every deed alarm'd,
By wit was settled, and by vice was charm'd.
For Abel enter'd in his bold career,
Like boys on ice, with pleasure and with fear;
Lingering, yet longing for the joy, he went,
Repenting now, now dreading to repent:
With awkward pace, and with himself at war,
Far gone, yet frighten'd that he went so far;
Oft for his efforts he'd solicit praise,
And then proceed with blunders and delays:
The young more aptly passion's calls pursue,
But age and weakness start at scenes so new,
And tremble, when they've done, for all they dared to do.
At length example Abel's dread removed,
With small concern he sought the joys he loved;
Not resting here, he claim'd his share of fame,
And first their votary, then their wit became;

His jest was bitter and his satire bold,
When he his tales of formal brethren told;
What time with pious neighbours he discuss'd,
Their boasted treasure and their boundless trust
"Such were our dreams," the jovial elder cried;
"Awake and live," his youthful friends replied.
Now the gay clerk a modest drab despised,
And clad him smartly as his friends advised
So fine a coat upon his back he threw,
That not an alley-boy old Abel knew;
Broad polish'd buttons blazed that coat upon,
And just beneath the watch's trinkets shone,—
A splendid watch, that pointed out the time,
To fly from business and make free with crime;
The crimson waistcoat and the silken hose
Rank'd the lean man among the Borough beaux:
His raven hair he cropp'd with fierce disdain,
And light elastic locks encased his brain:
More pliant pupil who could hope to find,
So deck'd in person and so changed in mind?
When Abel walked the streets, with pleasant mien,
He met his friends, delighted to be seen;
And when he rode along the public way,
No beau so gaudy, and no youth so gay.
His pious sister, now an ancient maid,
For Abel fearing, first in secret pray'd,
Then thus in love and scorn her notions she convey'd.
"Alas! my brother! can I see the pace
Hoodwink'd to hell, and not lament thy case,
Nor stretch my feeble hand to stop thy headlong race!
Lo! thou art bound; a slave in Satan's chain,
The righteous Abel turn'd the wretched Cain;
His brother's blood against the murderer cried,
Against thee thine, unhappy suicide!
Are all our pious nights and peaceful days,
Our evening readings and our morning praise,
Our spirits' comfort in the trials sent,
Our hearts' rejoicings in the blessings lent,
All that o'er grief a cheering influence shed,
Are these for ever and for ever fled?
"When, in the years gone by, the trying years,
When faith and hope had strife with wants and fears,
Thy nerves have trembled till thou couldst not eat
(Dress'd by this hand) thy mess of simple meat;
When, grieved by fastings, gall'd by fates severe
Slow pass'd the days of the successless year;
Still in these gloomy hours, my brother then
Had glorious views, unseen by prosperous men:

And when thy heart has felt its wish denied,
What gracious texts hast thou to grief applied;
Till thou hast enter'd in thine humble bed,
By lofty hopes and heavenly musings fed;
Then I have seen thy lively looks express
The spirit's comforts in the man's distress.

"Then didst thou cry, exulting, 'Yes, 'tis fit,
'Tis meet and right, my heart! that we submit:'
And wilt thou, Abel, thy new pleasures weigh
Against such triumphs?—Oh! repent and pray.

"What are thy pleasures?—with the gay to sit,
And thy poor brain torment for awkward wit;
All thy good thoughts (thou hat'st them) to restrain,
And give a wicked pleasure to the vain;
Thy long, lean frame by fashion to attire,
That lads may laugh and wantons may admire;
To raise the mirth of boys, and not to see,
Unhappy maniac! that they laugh at thee.

"These boyish follies, which alone the boy
Can idly act or gracefully enjoy,
Add new reproaches to thy fallen state,
And make men scorn what they would only hate.

"What pains, my brother, dost thou take to prove
A taste for follies which thou canst not love!
Why do thy stiffening limbs the steed bestride—
That lads may laugh to see thou canst not ride?
And why (I feel the crimson tinge my cheek)
Dost thou by night in Diamond-Alley sneak?

"Farewell! the parish will thy sister keep,
Where she in peace shall pray and sing and sleep,
Save when for thee she mourns, thou wicked, wandering sheep!
When youth is fallen, there's hope the young may rise,
But fallen age for ever hopeless lies;
Torn up by storms, and placed in earth once more,
The younger tree may sun and soil restore:
But when the old and sapless trunk lies low,
No care or soil can former life bestow;
Reserved for burning is the worthless tree—
And what, O Abel! is reserved for thee?"

These angry words our hero deeply felt,
Though hard his heart, and indisposed to melt!
To gain relief he took a glass the more,
And then went on as careless as before;
Thenceforth, uncheck'd, amusements he partook,
And (save his ledger) saw no decent book,
Him found the Merchant punctual at his task,
And that perform'd, he'd nothing more to ask;

He cared not how old Abel play'd the fool,
No master he, beyond the hours of school:
Thus they proceeding, had their wine and joke,
Till merchant Dixon felt a warning stroke,
And, after struggling half a gloomy week,
Left his poor Clerk another friend to seek.

Alas! the son, who led the saint astray,
Forgot the man whose follies made him gay;
He cared no more for Abel in his need,
Than Abel cared about his hackney steed;
He now, alas! had all his earnings spent,
And thus was left to languish and repent;
No school nor clerkship found he in the place,
Now lost to fortune, as before to grace.

For town-relief the grieving man applied,
And begg'd with tears what some with scorn denied,
Others look'd down upon the glowing vest,
And frowning, ask'd him at what price he dress'd?
Happy for him his country's laws are mild,
They must support him, though they still reviled;
Grieved, abject, scorn'd, insulted, and betray'd,
Of God unmindful, and of man afraid,—
No more he talk'd; 't was pain, 't was shame to speak
His heart was sinking, and his frame was weak.
His sister died with such serene delight,
He once again began to think her right;
Poor like himself, the happy spinster lay,
And sweet assurance bless'd her dying-day:
Poor like the spinster he, when death was nigh,
Assured of nothing, felt afraid to die,
The cheerful clerks who sometimes pass'd the door,
Just mention'd "Abel!" and then thought no more.
So Abel, pondering on his state forlorn,
Look'd round for comfort, and was chased by scorn.
And now we saw him on the beach reclined,
Or causeless walking in the wintry wind;
And when it raised a loud and angry sea,
He stood and gazed in wretched reverie:
He heeded not the frost, the rain, the snow,
Close by the sea he walk'd alone and slow:
Sometimes his frame through many an hour he spread
Upon a tombstone, moveless as the dead;
And was there found a sad and silent place,
There would he creep with slow and measured pace:
Then would he wander by the river's side,
And fix his eyes upon the falling tide;
The deep dry ditch, the rushes in the fen,
And mossy crag-pits were his lodgings then:

There, to his discontented thought a prey,
The melancholy mortal pined away.
The neighb'ring poor at length began to speak
Of Abel's ramblings—he'd been gone a week;
They knew not where, and little care they took
For one so friendless and so poor to look.
At last a stranger, in a pedlar's shed,
Beheld him hanging—he had long been dead.
He left a paper, penn'd at sundry times,
Entitled thus—"My Groanings and my Crimes!"

"I was a Christian man, and none could lay
Aught to my charge; I walk'd the narrow way:
All then was simple faith, serene and pure,
My hope was steadfast and my prospect sure;
Then was I tried by want and sickness sore,
But these I clapp'd my shield of faith before,
And cares and wants, and man's rebukes I bore:
Alas! new foes assail'd me, I was vain,
They stung my pride and they confused my brain:
Oh! these deluders! with what glee they saw
Their simple dupe transgress the righteous law;
'T was joy to them to view that dreadful strife,
When faith and frailty warr'd for more than life;
So with their pleasures they beguiled the heart,
Then with their logic they allay'd the smart;
They proved, (so thought I then) with reasons strong,
That no man's feelings ever led him wrong:
And thus I went, as on the varnish'd ice,
The smooth career of unbelief and vice.
Oft would the youths, with sprightly speech and bold,
Their witty tales of naughty priests unfold;
'T'was all a craft,' they said, 'a cunning trade,
Not she the priests, but priests Religion made;'
So I believed:"—No, Abel! to thy grief:
So thou relinquish'dst all that was belief:—
I grew as very flint, and when the rest
Laugh'd at devotion, I enjoy'd the jest;
But this all vanish'd like the morning-dew,
When unemploy'd, and poor again I grew;
Yea! I was doubly poor, for I was wicked too.

"The mouse that trespass'd and the treasure stole,
Found his lean body fitted to the hole:
Till, having fatted, he was forced to stay,
And, fasting, starve his stolen bulk away:
Ah! worse for me—grown poor, I yet remain
In sinful bonds, and pray and fast in vain.

"At length I thought, although these friends of sin
Have spread their net, and caught their prey therein;

Though my hard heart could not for mercy call,
Because, though great my grief, my faith was small:
Yet, as the sick on skilful men rely,
The soul diseased may to a doctor fly.
"A famous one there was, whose skill had wrought
Cures past belief, and him the sinners sought;
Numbers there were defiled by mire and filth,
Whom he recover'd by his goodly tilth:
'Come then,' I said, 'let me the man behold,
And tell my case'—I saw him and I told.
"With trembling voice, 'Oh! reverend sir,' I said
'I once believed, and I was then misled:
And now such doubts my sinful soul beset,
I dare not say that I'm a Christian yet:
Canst thou, good sir, by thy superior skill,
Inform my judgment and direct my will?
Ah! give thy cordial; let my soul have rest,
And be the outward man alone distress'd;
For at my state I tremble.'—'Tremble more,'
Said the good man, 'and then rejoice therefore;
'Tis good to tremble; prospects then are fair,
When the lost soul is plunged in deep despair:
Once thou wert simply honest, just, and pure,
Whole, as thou thought'st, and never wish'd a cure
Now thou hast plunged in folly, shame, disgrace,
Now thou'art an object meet for healing grace;
No merit thine, no virtue, hope, belief,
Nothing hast thou, but misery, sin, and grief,
The best, the only titles to relief.'
"What must I do,' I said, 'my soul to free?'
'Do nothing, man: it will be done for thee.'—
'But must I not my reverend guide, believe?'—
'If thou art called thou wilt the faith receive;'—
'But I repent not.'—Angry he replied,
'If thou art called thou needest nought beside:
Attend on us, and if 't is Heaven's decree,
The call will come,—if not, ah! woe for thee.'
"There then I waited, ever on the watch,
A spark of hope, a ray of light to catch;
His words fell softly like the flakes of snow
But I could never find my heart o'erflow:
He cried aloud, till in the flock began
The sigh, the tear, as caught from man to man;
They wept and they rejoiced, and there was I
Hard as a flint, and as the desert dry:
To me no tokens of the call would come,
I felt my sentence, and received my doom;

But I complain'd—'Let thy repinings cease,
Oh! man of sin, for they thy guilt increase;
It bloweth where it listeth, die in peace.'—
—'In peace, and perish?' I replied: 'impart
Some better comfort to a burthen'd heart.'—
'Alas!' the priest return'd, 'can I direct
The heavenly call?—Do I proclaim th' elect?
Raise not thy voice against the Eternal will,
But take thy part with sinners, and be still.'
"Alas, for me! no more the times of peace
Are mine on earth—in death my pains may cease.
"Foes to my soul! ye young seducers, know,
What serious ills from your amusements flow;
Opinions, you with so much ease profess,
O'erwhelm the simple and their minds oppress:
Let such be happy, nor with reason strong,
That make them wretched, prove their notions wrong;
Let them proceed in that they deem the way,
Fast when they will, and at their pleasure pray:
Yes, I have pity for my brethren's lot,
And so had Dives, but it help'd him not:
And is it thus?—I m full of doubts:—Adieu!
Perhaps his reverence is mistaken too."

LETTER XXII.

THE POOR OF THE BOROUGH:

PETER GRIMES.

The Father of Peter a Fisherman—Peter's early conduct—His Grief for the old Man—He takes an Apprentice—The Boy's Suffering and Fate—A second Boy: how he died—Peter acquitted—A third Apprentice—A Voyage by Sea: the Boy does not return—Evil Report on Peter: he is tried and threatened—Lives alone—His Melancholy—And incipient Madness—Is observed and visited—He escapes and is taken: is lodged in a Parish-house: Women attend and watch him—He speaks in a Delirium: grows more collected—His account of his Feelings and visionary Terrors previous to his Death.

Old *Peter Grimes* made fishing his employ,
His wife he cabin'd with him and his boy,
And seem'd that life laborious to enjoy.
To town came quiet Peter with his fish,
And had of all a civil word and wish.
He left his trade upon the Sabbath-day,
And took young Peter in his hand to pray:

But soon the stubborn boy from care broke loose,
At first refused, then added his abuse:
His father's love he scorn'd, his power defied,
But being drunk, wept sorely when he died.
Yes! then he wept, and to his mind there came
Much of his conduct, and he felt the shame,—
How he had oft the good old man reviled,
And never paid the duty of a child;
How, when the father in his Bible read,
He in contempt and anger left the shed:
'It is the word of life,' the parent cried;
—"This is the life itself," the boy replied.
And while old Peter in amazement stood,
Gave the hot spirit to his boiling blood:—
How he, with oath and furious speech, began
To prove his freedom and assert the man;
And when the parent check'd his impious rage,
How he had cursed the tyranny of age,—
Nay, once had dealt the sacrilegious blow
On his bare head, and laid his parent low;
The father groan'd—"If thou art old,' said he,
'And hast a son—thou wilt remember me:
Thy mother left me in a happy time,
Thou kill'st not her—Heav'n spares the double crime."
On an inn-settle, in his maudlin grief,
This he revolved, and drank for his relief.
Now lived the youth in freedom, but debarr'd
From constant pleasure, and he thought it hard;
Hard that he could not every wish obey,
But must awhile relinquish ale and play:
Hard! that he could not to his cards attend,
But must acquire the money he would spend.
With greedy eye he look'd on all he saw,
He knew not justice, and he laugh'd at law;
On all he mark'd, he stretch'd his ready hand;
He fish'd by water and he filch'd by land:
Oft in the night has Peter dropp'd his oar,
Fled from his boat, and sought for prey on shore;
Oft up the hedge-row glided, on his back
Bearing the orchard's produce in a sack,
Or farm-yard load, tugg'd fiercely from the stack;
And as these wrongs to greater numbers rose,
The more he look'd on all men as his foes.
He built a mud-wall'd hovel, where he kept
His various wealth, and there he oft-times slept;
But no success could please his cruel soul,
He wish'd for one to trouble and controul;
He wanted some obedient boy to stand
And bear the blow of his outrageous hand;

And hoped to find in some propitious hour
A feeling creature subject to his power.
Peter had heard there were in London then,—
Still have they being!—workhouse-clearing men,
Who, undisturb'd by feelings just or kind,
Would parish-boys to needy tradesmen bind:
They in their want a trifling sum would take,
And toiling slaves of piteous orphans make.
Such Peter sought, and when a lad was found,
The sum was dealt him, and the slave was bound.
Some few in town observed in Peter's trap
A boy, with jacket blue and woollen cap:
But none enquired how Peter used the rope,
Or what the bruise, that made the stripling stoop;
None could the ridges on his back behold,
None sought him shiv'ring in the winter's cold:
None put the question,—"Peter, dost thou give
The boy his food?—What, man! the lad must live:
Consider, Peter, let the child have bread,
He'll serve thee better if he's stroked and fed."
None reason'd thus—and some, on hearing cries,
Said calmly, "Grimes is at his exercise."
Pinn'd, beaten, cold, pinch'd, threaten'd, and abused,
His efforts punish'd, and his food refused,—
Awake tormented,—soon aroused from sleep,—
Struck if he wept, and yet compell'd to weep,
The trembling boy dropp'd down and strove to pray,
Received a blow, and trembling turn'd away,
Or sobb'd and hid his piteous face;—while he,
The savage master, grinn'd in horrid glee:
He'd now the power he ever loved to show,
A feeling being subject to his blow.
Thus lived the lad, in hunger, peril, pain,
His tears despised, his supplications vain;
Compell'd by fear to lie, by need to steal,
His bed uneasy and unblessed his meal:
For three sad years the boy his tortures bore,
And then his pains and trials we no more.
"How died he, Peter?" when the people said,
He growl'd—"I found him lifeless in his bed;"
Then tried for softer tone, and sigh'd, "Poor Sam is dead."
Yet murmurs were there and some questions ask'd—
How he was fed, how punish'd, and how task'd?
Much they suspected, but they little proved,
And Peter pass'd untroubled and unmoved.
Another boy with equal ease was found,
The money granted, and the victim bound;
And what his fate?—One night it chanced he fell
From the boat's mast and perish'd in her well.

Where fish were living kept, and where the boy
(So reason'd men) could not himself destroy:—
"Yes! so it was," said Peter, "in his play,
(For he was idle both by night and day,)
He climb'd the main-mast and then fell below;"—
Then show'd his corpse, and pointed to the blow:
"What said the jury?"—they were long in doubt,
But sturdy Peter faced the matter out:
So they dismiss'd him, saying at the time,
"Keep fast your hatchway when you've boys who climb."
This hit his conscience, and he colour'd more
Than for the closest questions put before.
Thus all his fears the verdict set aside,
And at the slave-shop Peter still applied.
Then came a boy, of manners soft and mild,—
Our seamen's wives with grief beheld the child
All thought (the poor themselves) that he was one
Of gentle blood, some noble sinner's son.
Who had, belike, deceived some humble maid,
Whom he had first seduced and then betray'd:—
However this, he seem'd a gracious lad,
In grief submissive and with patience sad.
Passive he labour'd, till his slender frame
Bent with his loads, and he at length was lame:
Strange that a frame so weak could bear so long
The grossest insult and the foulest wrong;
But there were causes—in the town they gave
Fire, food, and comfort to the gentle slave;
And though stern Peter, with a cruel hand,
And knotted rope, enforced the rude command,
Yet he consider'd what he'd lately felt,
And his vile blows with selfish pity dealt.
One day such draughts the cruel fisher made,
He could not vend them in his borough-trade,
But sail'd for London-mart: the boy was ill,
But ever humbled to his master's will:
And on the river, where they smoothly sail'd,
He strove with terror and awhile prevail'd;
But new to danger on the angry sea,
He clung affrighten'd to his master's knee:
The boat grew leaky and the wind was strong,
Rough was the passage and the time was long;
His liquor fail'd, and Peter's wrath arose,—
No more is known—the rest we must suppose,
Or learn of Peter:—Peter says, he "spied
The stripling's danger and for harbour tried;
Meantime the fish, and then th' apprentice died."
The pitying women raised a clamour round,
And weeping said, "Thou hast thy 'prentice drown'd!"

Now the stern man was summon'd to the hall,
To tell his tale before the burghers all:
He gave th' account; profess'd the lad he loved,
And kept his brazen features all unmoved.
The mayor himself with tone severe replied,—
"Henceforth with thee shall never boy abide:
Hire thee a freeman, whom thou durst not beat,
But who, in thy despite, will sleep and eat:
Free thou art now!—again shouldst thou appear,
Thou'lt find thy sentence, like thy soul, severe."
Alas! for Peter not a helping hand,
So was he hated, could he now command;
Alone he row'd his boat, alone he cast
His nets beside, or made his anchor fast,
To hold a rope or hear a curse was none,—
He toil'd and rail'd; he groan'd and swore alone.
Thus by himself compell'd to live each day,
To wait for certain hours the tide's delay;
At the same time the same dull views to see,
The bounding marsh bank and the blighted tree:
The water only when the tides were high,
When low, the mud half-cover'd and half-dry;
The sun-burnt tar that blisters on the planks,
And bank-side stakes in their uneven ranks;
Heaps of entangled weeds that slowly float,
As the tide rolls by the impeded boat.
When tides were neap, and, in the sultry day,
Through the tall bounding mud-banks made their way
Which on each side rose swelling, and below
The dark warm flood ran silently and slow;
There anchoring, Peter chose from man to hide,
There hang his head, and view the lazy tide
In its hot slimy channel slowly glide,
Where the small eels that left the deeper way
For the warm shore, within the shallows play;
Where gaping muscles, left upon the mud,
Slope their slow passage to the fallen flood;—
Here dull and hopeless, he'd lie down and trace
How sidelong crabs had scrawl'd their crooked race
Or sadly listen to the tuneless cry
Of fishing gull or clanging golden-eye:
What time the sea-birds to the marsh would come,
And the loud bittern, from the bull-rush home,
Gave from the salt-ditch side the bellowing boom:
He nursed the feelings these dull scenes produce,
And loved to stop beside the opening sluice;
Where the small stream, confined in narrow bound,
Ran with a dull, unvaried, saddening sound;

Where all, presented to the eye or ear,
Oppress'd the soul with misery, grief, and fear.
Besides these objects, there were places three,
Which Peter seem'd with certain dread to see;
When he drew near them he would turn from each
And loudly whistle till he pass'd the reach.
A change of scene to him brought no relief,
In town, 't was plain, men took him for a thief:
The sailors wives would stop him in the street,
And say, "Now, Peter, thou'st no boy to beat:"
Infants at play, when they perceived him, ran,
Warning each other—"That s the wicked man:"
He growl'd an oath, and in an angry tone
Cursed the whole place and wish'd to be alone.
Alone he was, the same dull scenes in view,
And still more gloomy in his sight they grew:
Though man he hated, yet employ'd alone
At bootless labour, he would swear and groan,
Cursing the shoals that glided by the spot,
And gulls that caught them when his arts could not
Cold nervous tremblings shook his sturdy frame,
And strange disease—he couldn't say the name;
Wild were his dreams, and oft he rose in fright,
Waked by his view of horrors in the night,—
Horrors that would the sternest minds amaze,
Horrors that demons might be proud to raise;
And though he felt forsaken, grieved at heart,
To think he lived from all mankind apart;
Yet, if a man approach'd, in terrors he would start.
A winter pass'd since Peter saw the town,
And summer lodgers were again come down;
These, idly curious, with their glasses spied
The ships in bay as anchor'd for the tide,—
The river's craft, the bustle of the quay,—
And sea-port views, which landmen love to see.
One, up the river, had a man and boat
Seen day by day, now anchor'd, now afloat;
Fisher he seem'd, yet used not net nor hook:
Of sea-fowl swimming by no heed he took,
But on the gli ling waves still fix'd his lazy look:
At certain stations he would view the stream
As if he stood bewilder'd in a dream,
Or that some power had chain'd him for a time,
To feel a curse or meditate on crime.
This knowl, some curious, some in pity went.
And others question'd—"Wretch, dost thou repent?"
He heard, he trembled, and in fear resign'd
His boat; new terrors fill'd his restless mind:

Furious he grew, and up the country ran,
And there they seized him—a distemper'd man:—
Him we received, and to a parish bed,
Follow'd and cursed, the groaning man was led.
Here when they saw him, whom they used to shun,
A lost, lone man, so harass'd and undone;
Our gentle females, ever prompt to feel,
Perceived compassion on their anger steal:
His crimes they could not from their memories blot,
But they were grieved, and trembled at his lot.
A Priest too came, to whom his words are told;
And all the signs they shudder'd to behold.
"Look! look!" they cried, "his limbs with horror shake,
And as he grinds his teeth, what noise they make!
How glare his angry eyes, and yet he's not awake!
See! what cold drops upon his forehead stand,
And how he clenches that broad bony hand!"
The Priest attending, found he spoke at times
As one alluding to his fears and crimes;
"It was the fall," he muttered. "I can show
The manner how,—I never struck a blow:"—
And then aloud,—"Unhand me, free my chain;
On oath he fell—it struck him to the brain:—
Why ask my father?—that old man will swear
Against my life; besides he was not there:—
What, all agreed?—Am I to die to-day?—
My Lord, in mercy give me time to pray."
Then as they watch'd him, calmer he became,
And grew so weak he could not move his frame,
But murmuring spake—while they could see and hear
The start of terror and the groan of fear;
See the large dew-beads on his forehead rise,
And the cold death-drop glaze his sunken eyes;
Nor yet he died, but with unwonted force
Seem'd with some fancied being to discourse:
He knew not us, or with accustomed art
He hid the knowledge, yet exposed his heart;
'T was part confession and the rest defence,
A madman's tale, with gleams of waking sense.
"I'll tell you all," he said, "the very day
When the old man first placed them in my way:
My father's spirit—he who always tried
To give me trouble, when he lived and died—
When he was gone he could not be content
To see my days in painful labour spent,
But would appoint his meetings, and he made
Me watch at these, and so neglect my trade.
"'T was one hot noon, all silent, still, serene,
No living being had I lately seen;

I paddled up and down and dipp'd my net,
But (such his pleasure) I could nothing get,—
A father's pleasure when his toil was done,
To plague and torture thus an only son!
And so I sat and look'd upon the stream,
How it ran on, and felt as in a dream.
But dream it was not: No!—I fix'd my eyes
On the mid stream and saw the spirits rise:
I saw my father on the water stand,
And hold a thin pale boy in either hand;
And there they glided ghastly on the top
Of the salt flood, and never touch'd a drop:
I would have struck them, but they knew th' intent
And smiled upon the oar and down they went.

"Now from that day, whenever I began
To dip my net, there stood the hard old man—
He and those boys: I humbled me and pray'd
They would be gone;—they heeded not, but stay'd:
Nor could I turn, nor would the boat go by,
But, gazing on the spirits, there was I:
They bade me leap to death, but I was loth to die:
And every day, as sure as day arose,
Would these three spirits meet me ere the close;
To hear and [illegible] them daily was my doom,
And 'Come [illegible]' said, with weak, sad voices, 'come.'
To row away with all my strength I tried,
But there were they, hard by me in the tide, [cried
The three unbodied forms—and 'Come,' still 'come,' they

"Fathers should pity—but this old man shook
His hoary locks, and froze me by a look:
Thrice, when I struck them, through the water came
A hollow groan, that weaken'd all my frame:
'Father!' said I 'have mercy:'—he replied,
I know not what—the angry spirit lied,—
'Didst thou not draw thy knife?' said he:—'Twas true
But I had pity and my arm withdrew:
He cried for mercy which I kindly gave,
But he has no compassion in the grave.

"There were three places, where they ever rose—
The whole long river has not such as those—
Places accursed, where, if a man remain,
He'll see the things which strike him to the brain;
And there they made me on my paddle lean,
And look at them for hours;—accursed scene!
When they would glide to that smooth eddy-space
Then bid me leap and join them in the place
And at my groans each little villain sprite
Enjoy'd my pains and vanish'd in delight.

"In one fierce summer-day, when my poor brain
Was burning hot, and cruel was my pain,
Then came this father-foe, and there he stood
With his two boys again upon the flood:
There was more mischief in their eyes, more glee,
In their pale faces when they glared at me:
Still did they force me on the oar to rest.
And when they saw me fainting and oppress'd,
He, with his hand, the old man, scoop'd the flood,
And there came flame about him mix'd with blood;
He bade me stoop and look upon the place,
Then flung the hot-red liquor in my face;
Burning it blazed, and then I roar'd for pain,
I thought the demons would have turn'd my brain.

"Still there they stood, and forced me to behold
A place of horrors—they can not be told—
Where the flood open'd, there I heard the shriek
Of tortured guilt—no earthly tongue can speak:
All days alike! for ever!' did they say,
'And unremitted torments every day —
Yes, so they said "—But here he ceased, and gazed
On all around affrighten'd and amazed;
And still he tried to speak, and look'd in dread
Of frighten'd females gathering round his bed
Then dropp'd exhausted, and appear'd at rest
Till the strong foe the vital powers possess'd;
Then with an inward, broken voice he cried,
"Again they come," and mutter'd as he died.

LETTER XXIII.

PRISONS.

The Mind of Man accommodates itself to all Situations; Prisons otherwise would be intolerable — Debtors: their different Kinds: three particularly described; others more briefly— An arrested Prisoner: his Account of his Feelings and his Situation—The Alleviations of a Prison—Prisoners for Crimes —Two condemned: a vindictive Female: a Highwayman— The Interval between Condemnation and Execution — His Feelings as the Time approaches—His Dream.

'T is well—that Man to all the varying states
Of good and ill his mind accommodates;
He not alone progressive grief sustains,
But soon submits to unexperienced pains:
Change after change, all climes his body bears;
His mind repeated shocks of changing cares:

Faith and fair Virtue arm the nobler breast;
Hope and mere want of feeling aid the rest.
Or who could bear to lose the balmy air
Of summer's breath, from all things fresh and fair,
With all that man admires or loves below;
All earth and water, wood and vale bestow,
Where rosy pleasures smile, whence real blessings flow
With sight and sound of every kind that lives,
And crowning all with joy that freedom gives?
Who could from these, in some unhappy day,
Bear to be drawn by ruthless arms away,
To the vile nuisance of a noisome room,
Where only insolence and misery come?
(Save that the curious will by chance appear,
Or some in pity drop a fruitless tear:)
To a damp Prison, where the very sight
Of the warm sun is favour and not right;
Where all we hear or see the feelings shock,
The oath and groan, the fetter and the lock?
Who could bear this and live?—Oh! many a year
All this is borne, and miseries more severe;
And some there are, familiar with the scene,
Who live in mirth, though few become serene.
Far as I might the inward man perceive,
There was a constant effort—not to grieve:
Not to despair, for better days would come,
And the freed debtor smile again at home:
Subdued his habits, he may peace regain,
And bless the woes that were not sent in vain.
Thus might we class the Debtors here confined,
The more deceived, the more deceitful kind;
Here are the guilty race, who mean to live
On credit, that credulity will give;
Who purchase, conscious they can never pay;
Who know their fate, and traffic to betray:
On whom no pity, fear, remorse, prevail,
Their aim a statue, their resource a jail;—
These as the public spoilers we regard,
No dun so harsh, no creditor so hard.
A second kind are they, who truly strive
To keep their sinking credit long alive;
Success, nay prudence, they may want, but yet
They would be solvent, and deplore a debt;
All means they use, to all expedients run,
And are by slow, sad steps, at last undone:
Justly, perhaps, you blame their want of skill,
But mourn their feelings and absolve their will.
There is a Debtor, who his trifling *all*
Spreads in a shop; it would not fill a stall.

There at one window his temptation lays,
And in new modes disposes and displays:
Above the door you shall his name behold,
And what he vends in ample letters told,
The words 'Repository,' 'Warehouse,' all
He uses to enlarge concerns so small:
He to his goods assigns some beauty's name,
Then in her reign, and hopes they'll share her fame,
And talks of credit, commerce, traffic, trade,
As one important by their profit made;
But who can paint the vacancy, the gloom,
And spare dimensions of one backward room?
Wherein he dines, if so 't is fit to speak
Of one day's herring and the morrow's steak:
An anchorite in diet, all his care
Is to display his stock and vend his ware.
Long waiting hopeless, then he tries to meet
A kinder fortune in a distant street;
There he again displays, increasing yet
Corroding sorrow and consuming debt
Alas! he wants the requisites to rise—
The true connections, the availing ties;
They who proceed on certainties advance,
These are not times when men prevail by chance:
But still he tries, till, after years of pain,
He finds, with anguish, he has tried in vain.
Debtors are these on whom 't is hard to press,
T is base, impolitic, and merciless.
To these we add a miscellaneous kind,
By pleasure, pride, and indolence confined:
Those whom no calls, no warnings could divert,
The unexperienced and the inexpert;
The builder, idler, schemer, gamester, sot,—
The follies different, but the same their lot;
Victims of horses, lasses, drinking, dice,
Of every passion humour, whim, and vice
See! that sad Merchant, who but yesterday
Had a vast household in command and pay;
He now entreats permission to employ
A boy he needs, and then entreats the boy.
And there sits one, improvident but kind,
Bound for a friend, whom honour could not bind;
Sighing, he speaks to any who appear,
"A treach'rous friend—'t was that which sent me here:
I was too kind,—I thought I could depend
On his bare word—he was a treach'rous friend."
A female too!—it is to her a home,
She came before—and she again will come:

Her friends have pity? when their anger drops,
They take her home;—she's tried her schools and shops—
Plan after plan;— but fortune would not mend,
She to herself was still the treach'rous friend;
And wheresoe'er began, all here was sure to end:
And there she sits, as thoughtless and as gay
As if she'd means, or not a debt to pay—
Or knew to-morrow she'd be call'd away—
Or felt a shilling and could dine to-day.
While thus observing, I began to trace
The sober'd features of a well-known face—
Looks once familiar, manners form'd to please,
And all illumined by a heart at ease:
But fraud and flattery ever claim'd a part
(Still unresisted) of that easy heart;
But he at length beholds me—"Ah! my friend!
And have thy pleasures this unlucky end?
"Too sure," he said, and smiling as he sigh'd;
I went astray, though Prudence seem'd my guide
All she proposed I in my heart approved,
And she was honour'd, but my pleasure loved—
Pleasure, the mistress to whose arms I fled,
From wife-like lectures angry Prudence read.
"Why speak the madness of a life like mine,
The powers of beauty, novelty and wine?
Who paint the wanton smile, the venal vow,
Or friends whose worth I can appreciate now;
Oft I perceived my fate, and then could say,
I'll think to-morrow, I must live to-day:
So am I here—I own the laws are just—
And here, where thought is painful, think I must:
But speech is pleasant; this discourse with thee
Brings to my mind the sweets of liberty,
Breaks on the sameness of the place, and gives
The doubtful heart, conviction that it lives.
"Let me describe my anguish in the hour
When law detain'd me and I felt its power.
"When, in that shipwreck, this I found my shore,
And join'd the wretched, who were wreck'd before;
When I perceived each feature in the face,
Pinch'd through neglect or turbid by disgrace:
When in these wasting forms affliction stood
In my afflicted view, it chill'd my blood;—
And forth I rush'd, a quick retreat to make,
Till a loud laugh proclaim'd the dire mistake:
But when the groan had settled to a sigh,
When gloom became familiar to the eye,
When I perceive how others seem to rest,
With every evil rankling in my breast,—

Led by example, I put on the man,
Sing of my sighs, and trifle as I can.
"Homer! my Pope!" (for never will I seek
Applause for learning—nought have I with Greek)
Gives us the secrets of his pagan hell,
Where ghost with ghost in sad communion dwell:
Where shade meets shade, and round the gloomy meads
They glide, and speak of old heroic deeds,—
What fields they conquer'd, and what foes they slew,
And sent to join the melancholy crew.
When a new spirit in that world was found,
A thousand shadowy forms came flitting round;
Those who had known him, fond enquiries made,—
'Of all we left, informs us, gentle shade,
Now as we lead thee in our realms to dwell,
Our twilight groves and meads of asphodel.'
"What paints the poet, is our station here.
Where we like ghosts and flitting shades appear:
This is the hell he sings, and here we meet,
And former deeds to new-made friends repeat;
Heroic deeds, which here obtain us fame,
And are in fact the causes why we came:
Yes! this dim region is old Homer's hell,
Abate but groves and meads of asphodel.
Here, when a stranger from your world we spy,
We gather round him and for news apply;
He hears unheeding, nor can speech endure,
But shivering gazes on the vast obscure;
We smiling pity, and by kindness show
We felt his feelings and his terrors know;
Then speak of comfort—time will give him sight
Where now 'tis dark; where now 'tis woe—delight
"'Have hope,' we say, 'and soon the place to thee
Shall not a prison but a castle be:
When to the wretch whom care and guilt confound
The world's a prison, with a wider bound;
Go where he may, he feels himself confined,
And wears the fetters of an abject mind.
"But now adieu! those giant-keys appear
Thou art not worthy to be inmate here:
Go to thy world, and to the young declare
What we, our spirits and employments, are;
Tell them how we the ills of life endure,
Our empire stable, and our state secure;
Our dress, our diet, for their use describe,
And bid them haste to join the generous tribe:
Go to thy world, and leave us here to dwell,
Who to its joys and comforts bid farewell."

Farewell to these: but other scenes I view,
And other griefs, and guilt of deeper hue;
Where Conscience gives to outward ills her pain,
Gloom to the night, and pressure to the chain:
Here separate cells awhile in misery keep
Two doom'd to suffer, there they strive for sleep;
By day indulged, in larger space they range,
Their bondage certain, but their bounds have change

One was a female, who had grievous ill
Wrought in revenge, and she enjoy'd it still:
With death before her, and her fate in view,
Unsated vengeance in her bosom grew:
Sullen she was and threat'ning; in her eye
Glared the stern triumph that she dared to die:
But first a being in the world must leave—
'Twas once reproach: 'twas now a short reprieve.

She was pauper bound, who early gave
Her mind to vice and doubly was a slave:
Upbraided, beaten, held by rough control,
Revenge sustain'd, inspired, and fill'd her soul:
She fired a full-stored barn, confess'd the fact
And laugh'd at law and justified the act:
Our gentle Vicar tried his powers in vain,
She answer'd not, or answer'd with disdain;
Th' approaching fate she heard without a sigh,
And neither cared to live nor fear'd to die.

Not so he felt, who with her was to pay
The forfeit, life—with dread he view'd the day,
And that short space which yet for him remain'd,
Till with his limbs his faculties were chain'd:
He paced his narrow bounds some ease to find,
But found it not,—no comfort reached his mind:
Each sense was palsied; when he tasted food,
He sigh'd and said, "Enough—'tis very good."
Since his dread sentence, nothing seem'd to be
As once it was—he seeing could not see,
Nor hearing, hear aright;—when first I came
Within his view, I fancied there was shame,
I judged resentment; I mistook the air,—
These fainter passions live not with despair;
Or but exist and die.—Hope, fear, and love,
Joy, doubt, and hate, may other spirits move,
But touch not his, who every waking hour
Has one fix'd dread, and always feels its power.

"But will not mercy?"—No! she cannot plead
For such an outrage;—'t was a cruel deed:
He stopp'd a timid traveller;—to his breast,
With oaths and curses, was the dagger press'd:—

No! he must suffer; pity we may find
For one man's pangs, but must not wrong mankind.
Still I behold him, every thought employ'd
On one dire view!—all others are destroy'd;
This makes his features ghastly, gives the tone
Of his few words resemblance to a groan;
He takes his tasteless food, and when 't is done,
Counts up his meals, now lessen'd by that one;
For expectation is on time intent,
Whether he brings us joy or punishment.
Yes! e'en in sleep the impressions all remain,
He hears the sentence and he feels the chain;
He sees the judge and jury, when he shakes,
And loudly cries, "Not guilty," and awakes:
Then chilling tremblings o'er his body creep
Till worn out nature is compell'd to sleep.
Now comes the dream again: it shows each scene,
With each small circumstance that comes between—
The call to suffering and the very deed—
There crowds go with him, follow, and precede;
Some heartless shout, some pity, all condemn,
While he in fancied envy looks at them:
He seems the place for that sad act to see,
And dreams the very thirst which then will be:
A priest attends—it seems, the one he knew
In his best days, beneath whose care he grew.
At this his terrors take a sudden flight,
He sees his native village with delight;
The house, the chamber, where he once array'd
His youthful person; where he knelt and pray'd:
Then too the comforts he enjoy'd at home,
The days of joy: the joys themselves are come;—
The hours of innocence;—the timid look
Of his loved maid, when first her hand he took,
And told his hope; her trembling joy appears,
Her forced reserve and his retreating fears.
All now is present:—t is a moment s gleam
Of former sunshine—stay, delightful dream!
Let him within his pleasant garden walk,
Give him her arm, of blessings let them talk.
Yes! all are with him now, and all the while
Life's early prospects and his Fanny's smile:
Then come his sister and his village-friend,
And he will now the sweetest moments spend
Life has to yield;—No! never will he find
Again on earth such pleasure in his mind:
He goes through shrubby walks these friends among,
Love in their looks and honour on the tongue:

Nay, there's a charm beyond what nature shows
The bloom is softer and more sweetly glows;—
Pierced by no crime, and urged by no desire
For more than true and honest hearts require,
They feel the calm delight, and thus proceed
Through the green lane, — then linger in the mead, —
Stray o'er the heath in all its purple bloom, —
And pluck the blossom where the wild bees hum;
Then through the broomy bound with ease they pass,
And press the sandy sheep-walk's slender grass,
Where dwarfish flowers among the gorse are spread,
And the lamb browses by the linnet's bed;
Then 'cross the bounding brook they make their way
O'er its rough bridge and there behold the bay! —
The ocean smiling to the fervid sun —
The waves that faintly fall and slowly run —
The ships at distance and the boats at hand;
And now they walk upon the sea-side sand,
Counting the number and what kind they be,
Ships softly sinking in the sleepy sea:
Now arm in arm, now parted, they behold
The glitt'ring waters on the shingles roll'd:
The timid girls, half dreading their design,
Dip the small foot in the retarded brine,
And search for crimson weeds, which spreading flow
Or lie like pictures on the sand below:
With all those bright red pebbles, that the sun
Through the small waves so softly shines upon;
And those live lucid jellies which the eye
Delights to trace as they swim glittering by:
Pearl-shells and rubied star-fish they admire,
And will arrange above the parlour-fire,—
Tokens of bliss! — "Oh! horrible! a wave
Roars as it rises — save me, Edward! save!"
She cries: — Alas! the watchman on his way
Calls, and lets in — truth, terror, and the day!

LETTER XXIV.

SCHOOLS.

Schools of every Kind to be found in the Borough—The School for Infants—The School Preparatory: the sagacity of the Mistress in foreseeing Character—Day-Schools of the lower Kind—A Master with Talents adapted to such Pupils: one of superior Qualifications—Boarding-Schools: that for young Ladies: one going first to the Governess, one finally returning Home—School for Youth: Master and Teacher; various Dispositions and Capacities—The Miser Boy—The Boy-Bully—Sons of Farmers: how amused—What Study will effect, examined—A College Life: one sent from his College to a Benefice; one retained there in Dignity—The Advantages in either Case not considerable—Where, then, the Good of a literary Life?—Answered—Conclusion.

To every class we have a School assign'd,
Rules for all ranks and food for every mind:
Yet one there is, that small regard to rule
Or study pays, and still is deem'd a School;
That where a deaf, poor, patient widow sits,
And awes some thirty infants as she knits;
Infants of humble, busy wives, who pay
Some trifling price for freedom through the day.
At this good matron's hut the children meet,
Who thus becomes the mother of the street:
Her room is small, they cannot widely stray,—
Her threshold high, they cannot run away:
Though deaf, she sees the rebel-heroes shout,—
Though lame, her white rod nimbly walks about;
With band of yarn she keeps offenders in,
And to her gown the sturdiest rogue can pin;
Aided by these, and spells, and tell-tale birds,
Her power they dread and reverence her words.

To Learning's second seats we now proceed,
Where humming students gilded primers read;
Or books with letters large and pictures gay,
To make their reading but a kind of play—
'Reading made Easy,' so the titles tell:
But they who read must first begin to spell:
There may be profit in these arts, but still,
Learning is labour, call it what you will;

Upon the youthful mind a heavy load,
Nor must we hope to find the royal road.
Some will their easy steps to science show,
And some to heav'n itself their by-way know;
Ah! trust them not,—who fame or bliss would share,
Must learn by labour, and must live by care.

Another matron, of superior kind,
For higher schools prepares the rising mind;
Preparatory she her Learning calls,
The step first made to colleges and halls.

She early sees to what the mind will grow,
Nor abler judge of infant-powers I know;
She sees what soon the lively will impede,
And how the steadier will in turn succeed;
Observes the dawn of wisdom, fancy, taste,
And knows what parts will wear, and what will waste.
She marks the mind too lively, and at once
Sees the gay coxcomb and the rattling dunce.

Long has she lived, and much she loves to trace
Her former pupils, now a lordly race:
Whom when she sees rich robes and furs bedeck,
She marks the pride which once she strove to check.
A Burgess comes, and she remembers well
How hard her task to make his worship spell;
Cold, selfish, dull, inanimate, unkind,
'T was but by anger he display'd a mind:
Now civil, smiling, complaisant, and gay,
The world has worn th' unsocial crust away:
That sullen spirit now a softness wears,
And, save by fits, e'en dulness disappears:
But still the matron can the man behold,
Dull, selfish, hard, inanimate, and cold.
A Merchant passes, —"Probity and truth,
Prudence and patience, mark'd thee from thy youth."
Thus she observes, but oft retains her fears
For him, who now with name unstain'd appears;
Nor hope relinquishes, for one who yet
Is lost in error and involved in debt;
For latent evil in that heart she found,
More open here, but here the core was sound.

Various our Day-Schools; here behold we one
Empty and still:—the morning duties done,
Soil'd, tatter'd, worn, and thrown in various heaps,
Appear their books, and there confusion sleeps;
The workmen all are from the Babel fled,
And lost their tools, till the return they dread:
Meantime the master, with his wig awry,
Prepares his books for business by-and-by:

Now all th' insignia of the monarch laid
Beside him rest, and none stand by afraid;
He, while his troop light-hearted leap and play,
Is all intent on duties of the day;
No more the tyrant stern or judge severe,
He feels the father's and the husband's fear.
Ah! little think the timid trembling crowd,
That one so wise, so powerful, and so proud,
Should feel himself, and dread the humble ills
Of rent-day charges and of coalman's bills;
That while they mercy from their judge implore,
He fears himself—a knocking at the door.
And feels the burthen as his neighbour states
His humble portion to the parish-rates.
They sit th' allotted hours, then eager run,
Rushing to pleasure when the duty's done;
His hour of leisure is of different kind,
Then cares domestic rush upon his mind,
And half the ease and comfort he enjoys,
Is when surrounded by slates, books, and boys.
Poor *Reuben Dixon* has the noisiest school
Of ragged lads, who ever bow'd to rule;
Low in his price—the men who heave our coals,
And clean our causeways, send him boys in shoals,
To see poor Reuben, with his fry beside,—
Their half-check'd rudeness and his half-scorn'd pride,—
Their room, the sty in which th' assembly meet,
In the close lane behind the Northgate-street;
T' observe his vain attempts to keep the peace,
Till tolls the bell, and strife and troubles cease,—
Calls for our praise; his labour praise deserves,
But not our pity; Reuben has no nerves:
'Mid noise and dirt, and stench, and play, and prate,
He calmly cuts the pen or views the slate.
But *Leonard;*—yes, for Leonard's fate I grieve,
Who loathes the station which he dares not leave;
He cannot dig, he will not beg his bread,
All his dependence rests upon his head;
And deeply skill'd in sciences and arts,
On vulgar lads he wastes superior parts.
Alas! what grief that feeling mind sustains,
In guiding hands and stirring torpid brains;
He whose proud mind from pole to pole will move,
And view the wonders of the worlds above;
Who thinks and reasons strongly:—hard his fate,
Confined for ever to the pen and slate:
True he submits, and when the long dull day
Has slowly pass'd, in weary tasks away

To other worlds with cheerful view he looks,
And parts the night between repose and books.
Amid his labours, he has sometimes tried
To turn a little from his cares aside;
Pope, Milton, Dryden, with delight has seized,
His soul engaged and of his trouble eased:
When, with a heavy eye and ill-done sum,
No part conceived, a stupid boy will come;
Then Leonard first subdues the rising frown,
And bids the blockhead lay his blunders down;
O'er which disgusted he will turn his eye,
To his sad duty his sound mind apply,
And, vex'd in spirit, throw his pleasures by.

Turn we to Schools which more than these afford—
The sound instruction and the wholesome board;
And first our School for Ladies:—pity calls
For one soft sigh, when we behold these walls,
Placed near the town, and where, from window high,
The fair, confined, may our free crowds espy,
With many a stranger gazing up and down,
And all the envied tumult of the town:
May, in the smiling summer-eve, when they
Are sent to sleep the pleasant hours away,
Behold the poor (whom they conceive the bless'd)
Employ'd for hours, and grieved they cannot rest.

Here the fond girl, whose days are sad and few,
Since dear mamma pronounced the last adieu,
Looks to the road, and fondly thinks she hears
The carriage-wheels, and struggles with her tears:
All yet is new, the misses great and small,
Madam herself, and teachers, odious all;
From laughter, pity, nay command, she turns,
But melts in softness, or with anger burns:
Nauseates her food, and wonders who can sleep
On such mean beds, where she can only weep:
She scorns condolence—but to all she hates,
Slowly at length her mind accommodates;
Then looks on bondage with the same concern
As others felt, and finds that she must learn
As others learn'd—the common lot to share,
To search for comfort and submit to care.

There are, 't is said, who on these seats attend,
And to these ductile minds destruction vend;
Wretches—(to virtue, peace, and nature, foes)—
To these soft minds, their wicked trash expose;
Seize on the soul, ere passions take the sway,
And let the heart, ere yet it feels, astray:
Smugglers obscene! and can there be who take
Infernal pains, the sleeping vice to wake?

Can there be those, by whom the thought defiled
Enters the spotless bosom of a child?
By whom the ill is to the heart convey'd,
Who lend the foe, not yet in arms, their aid,
And sap the city-walls before the siege be laid?
Oh! rather skulking in the by-ways steal,
And rob the poorest traveller of his meal;
Burst through the humblest trader's bolted door,
Bear from the widow's hut her winter-store;
With stolen steed, on highways take your stand,
Your lips with curses arm'd, with death your hand;—
Take all but life—the virtuous more would say,
Take life itself, dear as it is, away,
Rather than guilty thus the guileless soul betray.
Years pass away—let us suppose them past,
Th' accomplish'd nymph for freedom looks at last,
All hardships over, which a school contains,
Th' spirit's bondage and the body's pains;
Where teachers make the heartless, trembling set
Of pupils suffer for their own regret;
Where winter's cold, attack'd by one poor fire,
Chills the fair child, commanded to retire;
She felt it keenly in the morning-air,
Keenly she felt it at the evening prayer.
More pleasant summer; but then walks were made,
Not a sweet ramble, but a slow parade;
They moved by pairs beside the hawthorn-hedge,
Only to set their feelings on an edge;
And now at eve, when all their spirits rise,
Are sent to rest, and all their pleasure dies;
Where yet they all the town alert can see,
And distant plough-boys pacing o'er the lea.
These and the tasks successive masters brought—
The French they conn'd, the curious works they wrought!
The hours they made their taper fingers strike
Note after note, all dull to them alike;
Their drawings, dancings on appointed days,
Playing with globes, and getting parts of plays;
The tender friendships made 'twixt heart and heart,
When the dear friends had nothing to impart:—
All! all! are over;—now th' accomplish'd maid
Longs for the world, of nothing there afraid:
Dreams of delight invade her gentle breast,
And fancied lovers rob the heart of rest;
At the paternal door a carriage stands,
Love knits their hearts and Hymen joins their hands.
Ah!—world unknown! how charming is thy view
Thy pleasures many, and each pleasure new:

Ah!—world experienced! what of thee is told?
How few thy pleasures, and those few how old!
Within a silent street, and far apart
From noise of business, from a quay or mart,
Stands an old spacious building, and the din
You hear without, explains the work within;
Unlike the whispering of the nymphs, this noise
Loudly proclaims a "Boarding-School for Boys;"
The master heeds it not, for thirty years
Have render'd all to his familiar ears;
He sits in comfort, 'mid the various sound
Of mingled tones for ever flowing round;
Day after day he to his task attends,—
Unvaried toil, and care that never ends,—
Boys in their work proceed; while his employ
Admits no change, or changes but the boy;
Yet time has made it easy;—he beside
Has power supreme, and power is sweet to pride:
But grant him pleasure:—what can teachers feel
Dependent helpers always at the wheel?
Their power despised, their compensation small,
Their labour dull, their life laborious all;
Set after set the lower lads to make
Fit for the class which their superiors take;
The road of learning for a time to track
In roughest state, and then again go back:
Just the same way on other troops to wait,—
Attendants fix'd at learning's lower gate.
The Day-tasks now are over,—to their ground
Rush the gay crowd with joy-compelling sound;
Glad to illude the burthens of the day.
The eager parties hurry to their play:
Then in these hours of liberty we find
The native bias of an opening mind:
They yet possess not skill the mask to place,
And hide the passions glowing in the face;
Yet some are found—the close, the sly, the mean,
Who know already all must not be seen.
Lo! one who walks apart, although so young,
He lays restraint upon his eye and tongue;
Nor will he into scrapes or danger get,
And half the school are in the stripling's debt:
Suspicious, timid, he is much afraid
Of trick and plot:—he dreads to be betray'd:
He shuns all friendship, for he finds they lend,
When lads begin to call each other friend:
Yet self with self has war; the tempting sight
Of fruit on sale provokes his appetite:—

See! how he walks the sweet seduction by;
That he is tempted, costs him first a sigh,—
'T is dangerous to indulge, 't is grievous to deny!
This he will choose, and whispering asks the price,
The purchase dreadful, but the portion nice;
Within the pocket he explores the pence;
Without, temptation strikes on either sense,
The sight, the smell;—but then he thinks again
O money gone! while fruit nor taste remain.
Meantime there comes an eager thoughtless boy,
Who gives the price and only feels the joy:
Example dire! the youthful miser stops,
And slowly back the treasured coinage drops:
Heroic deed! for should he now comply,
Can he to-morrow's appetite deny?
Beside, these spendthrifts who so freely live,
Cloy'd with their purchase, will a portion give:—
Here ends debate, he buttons up his store,
And feels the comfort that it burns no more.
Unlike to him the Tyrant boy, whose sway
All hearts acknowledge, him the crowds obey:
At his command they break through every rule;
Whoever governs, he controls the school:
'T is not the distant emperor moves their fear,
But the proud viceroy who is ever near.
Verres could do that mischief in a day,
For which not Rome, in all its power could pay,
And these boy-tyrants will their slaves distress,
And do the wrongs no master can redress:
The mind they load with fear: it feels disdain
For its own baseness: yet it tries in vain
To shake th' admitted power:—the coward comes again:
'T is more than present pain these tyrants give,
Long as we've life some strong impression live;
And these young ruffians in the soul will sow
Seeds of all vices that on weakness grow.
Hark! at his word the trembling younglings flee
Where he is walking none must walk but he
See! from the winter-fire the weak-retreat,
His the warm corner, his the favourite seat,
Save when he yields it to some slave to keep
Awhile, then back, at his return, to creep:
At his command his poor dependants fly,
And humbly bribe him as a proud ally;
Flatter'd by all, the notice he bestows,
Is gross abuse, and bantering and blows;
Yet he's a dunce, and spite of all his fame
Without the desk, within he feels his shame:

For there the weaker boy, who felt his scorn,
For him corrects the blunders of the morn;
And he is taught, unpleasant truth! to find
The trembling body has a prouder mind.
Hark! to that shout, that burst of empty noise,
From a rude set of bluff, obstreperous boys
They who, like colts let loose, with vigour bound,
And thoughtless spirit, o'er the beaten ground;
Fearless they leap, and every youngster feels
His Alma active in his hands and heels.
These are the sons of farmers, and they come
With partial fondness for the joys of home:
Their minds are coursing in their fathers' fields,
And e'en the dream a lively pleasure yields;
They, much enduring, sit the allotted hours,
And o'er a grammar waste their sprightly powers;
They dance; but them can measured steps delight,
Whom horse and hound to daring deeds excite?
Nor could they bear to wait from meal to meal,
Did they not slyly to the chamber steal,
And there the produce of the basket seize,
The mother's gift! still studious of their ease.
Poor Alma, thus oppress'd, forbears to rise,
But rests or revels in the arms and thighs.
"But is it sure that study will repay
The more attentive and forbearing?"—Nay!
The farm, the ship, the humble shop have each
Gains which severest studies seldom reach.
At College place a youth, who means to raise
His state by merit; and his name by praise;
Still much he hazards: there is serious strife
In the contentions of a scholar's life.
Not all the mind's attention, care, distress,
Nor diligence itself, ensure success:
His jealous heart a rival's power may dread,
Till its strong feelings have confused his head,
And, after days and months, nay, years of pain,
He finds just lost the object he would gain.
But grant him this and all such life can give,
For other prospects he begins to live;
Begins to feel that man was form'd to look
And long for other objects than a book:
In his mind's eye his house and glebe he sees,
And farms and talks with farmers at his ease;
And time is lost, till fortune sends him forth
To a rude world unconscious of his worth.
There in some petty parish to reside,
The college-boast, the wond'ring village guide,

And though awhile his flock and dairy please,
He soon reverts to former joys and ease,
Glad when a friend shall come to break his rest,
And speak of all the pleasures they possess'd,
Of masters, fellows, tutors, all with whom
They shared those pleasures, never more to come;
Till both conceive the times by bliss endear'd,
Which once so dismal and so dull appear'd.

But fix our Scholar, and suppose him crown'd
With all the glory gain'd on classic ground;
Suppose the world without a sigh resign'd,
And to his college all his care confined:
Give him all honours that such states allow,
The freshman's terror and the tradesman's bow
Let his apartments with his taste agree,
And all his views be those he loves to see;
Let him each day behold the savoury treat,
For which he pays not, but is paid to eat;
These joys and glories soon delight no more,
Although, withheld, the mind is vex'd and sore;
The honour too is to the place confined,
Abroad they know not each superior mind:
Strangers no *wranglers* in these figures see,
Nor give they worship to a high degree;
Unlike the prophet s is the scholar's case,
His honour all is in his dwelling place:
And there such honours are familiar things;
What is a monarch in a crowd of kings?
Like other sovereigns he's by forms address'd,
By statutes govern'd and with rules oppress'd.

When all these forms and duties die away,
And the day passes like the former day,
Then of exterior things at once bereft,
He's to himself and one attendant left;
Nae, John too goes; nor aught of service more
Remains for him; he gladly quits the door,
And, as he whistles to the cottage-gate,
He kindly pities his poor master's fate.

Books cannot always please, however good;
Minds are not ever craving for their food;
But sleep will soon the weary soul prepare
For cares to-morrow that were this day's care:
For forms, for feasts, that sundry times have past,
And formal feasts that will for ever last.

"But then from Study will no comforts rise?'—
Yes! such as studious minds alone can prize;
Comforts, yea!—joys ineffable they find,
Who seek the prouder pleasures of the mind:

The soul, collected in those happy hours,
Then makes her efforts, then enjoys her powers;
And in those seasons feels herself repaid,
For labours past and honours long delay'd.
No! 't is not worldly gain, although by chance
The sons of learning may to wealth advance;
Nor station high, though in some favouring hour
The sons of learning may arrive at power;
Nor is it glory, though the public voice
Of honest praise will make the heart rejoice:
But 't is the mind's own feelings give the joy,
Pleasures she gathers in her own employ—
Pleasures that gain or praise cannot bestow,
Yet can dilate and raise them when they flow.
For this the Poet looks the world around,
Where form and life and reasoning man are found;
He loves the mind, in all its modes, to trace,
And all the manners of the changing race;
Silent he walks the road of life along,
And views the aims of its tumultuous throng;
He finds what shapes the Proteus-passions take,
And what strange waste of life and joy they make,
And loves to show them in their varied ways.
With honest blame or with unflattering praise;
'Tis good to know, 't is pleasant to impart,
These turns and movements of the human heart;
The stronger features of the soul to paint,
And make distinct the latent and the faint;
MAN AS HE IS, to place in all men's view,
Yet none with rancour, none with scorn pursue;
Nor be it ever of my Portraits told—
"Here the strong lines of malace we behold."

THIS let me hope, that when in public view
I bring my Pictures, men may feel them true;
"This is a Likeness," may they all declare,
"And I have seen him, but I know not where:"
For I should mourn the mischief I had done,
If as the likeness all would fix on one.

Man's Vice and Crime I combat as I can,
But to his GOD and conscience leave the Man;
I search (a Quixote!) all the land about,
To find its Giants and Enchanters out,—
The Giant-Folly, the Enchanter-Vice,
Whom doubtless I shall vanquish in a trice;—

But is there man whom I would injure?—No!
I am to him a fellow, not a foe,—
A fellow-sinner, who must rather dread
The bolt, than hurl it at another's head.
No! let the guiltless, if there such be found,
Launch forth the spear, and deal the deadly wound
How can I so the cause of Virtue aid,
Who am myself attainted and afraid?
Yet as I can, I point the powers of rhyme,
And sparing criminals, attack the crime.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THE BIRTH OF FLATTERY.

The Subject—Poverty and Cunning described—When united, a jarring Couple—Mutual Reproof—The Wife consoled by a Dream—Birth of a Daughter—Description and Prediction of Envy—How to be rendered ineffectual, explained in a Vision—Simulation foretells the future Success and Triumphs of Flattery—Her Power over various Characters and different Minds; over certain Classes of Men; over Envy himself—Her successful Art of softening the Evils of Life; of changing Characters; of meliorating Prospects, and affixing Value to Possessions, Pictures, &c.—Conclusion.

MUSE of my Spenser, who so well could sing
The passions all, their bearings and their ties;
Who could in view those shadowy beings bring,
And with bold hand remove each dark disguise,
Wherein love, hatred, scorn, or anger lies:
Guide him to Fairy-land, who now intends
That way his flight; assist him as he flies,
To mark those passions, Virtue's foes and friends,
By whom when led she droops, when leading she ascends.

Yes! they appear, I see the fairy train!
And who that modest nymph of meek address?
Not Vanity, though loved by all the vain;
Not Hope, though promising to all success;
Not Mirth, nor Joy, though foe to all distress;
Thee, sprightly syren, from this train I choose,
Thy birth relate, thy soothing arts confess;
'T is not in thy mild nature to refuse,
When poets ask thine aid, so oft their meed and muse.

In Fairy-land, on wide and cheerless plain,
Dwelt, in the house of *Care*, a sturdy swain;
A hireling he, who, when he till'd the soil,
Look'd to the pittance that repaid his toil:
And to a master left the mingled joy
And anxious care that follow'd his employ:
Sullen and patient he at once appear'd,
As one who murmur'd, yet as one who fear'd;
Th' attire was coarse that clothed his sinewy frame
Rude his address, and *Poverty* his name.

In that same plain a nymph, of curious taste,
A cottage (plann'd with all her skill) had placed;

Strange the materials, and for what design'd
The various parts, no simple man might find;
What seem'd the door, each entering guest withstood,
What seem'd a window was but painted wood;
But by a secret spring the wall would move,
And daylight drop through glassy door above:
'T was all her pride, new traps for praise to lay,
And all her wisdom was to hide her way;
In small attempts incessant were her pains,
And *Cunning* was her name among the swains.

Now, whether fate decreed this pair should wed,
And blindly drove them to the marriage bed;
Or whether love in some soft hour inclined
The damsel's heart, and won her to be kind.
Is yet unsung: they were an ill-match'd pair,
But both disposed to wed—and wed they were.

Yet, though united in their fortune, still
Their ways were diverse: varying was their will;
Nor long the maid had bless'd the simple man,
Before dissensions rose, and she began:—

"Wretch that I am! since to thy fortune bound,
What plan, what project, with success is crown'd?
I, who a thousand secret arts possess,
Who every rank approach with right address;
Who've loosed a guinea from a miser's chest,
And worm'd his secret from a traitor's breast;
Thence gifts and gains collecting, great and small,
Have brought to thee, and thou consum'st them all
For war like thine—a bog without a base—
Ingulfs all gains I gather for the place;
Feeding, unfill'd; destroying, undestroy'd;
It craves for ever, and is ever void:—
Wretch that I am! what misery have I found,
Since my sure craft was to thy calling bound!"

"Oh! vaunt of worthless art," the swain replied,
Scowling contempt, "how pitiful this pride!
What are these specious gifts, these paltry gains,
But base rewards for ignominious pains?
With all thy tricking, still for bread we strive,
Thine is, proud wretch! the care that cannot thrive;
By all thy boasted skill and baffled hooks,
Thou gain'st no more than students by their books,
No more than I for my poor deeds am paid,
Whom none can blame, will help, or dare upbraid

"Call this our need, a bog that all devours,—
Then what thy petty arts, but summer-flowers,
Gaudy and mean, and serving to betray
The place they make unprofitably gay?

Who know it not, some useless beauties see,—
But ah! to prove it was reserved for me."
Unhappy state! that, in decay of love,
Permits harsh truth his errors to disprove,
While he remains, to wrangle and to jar,
Is friendly tournament, not fatal war;
Love in his play will borrow arms of hate,
Anger and rage, upbraiding and debate;
And by his power the desperate weapons thrown,
Become as safe and pleasant as his own;
But left by him, their natures they assume,
And fatal, in their poisoning force, become.
Time fled, and now the swain compell'd to see
New cause for fear—"Is this thy thrift?" quoth he,
To whom the wife with cheerful voice replied:—
"Thou moody man, lay all thy fears aside,
I've seen a vision—they, from whom I came,
A daughter promise, promise wealth and fame;
Born with my features, with my arts, yet she
Shall patient, pliant, persevering be,
And in thy better ways resemble thee.
The fairies round shall at her birth attend,
The friend of all in all shall find a friend,
And save that one sad star that hour must gleme
On our fair child, how glorious were my dream!
This heard the husband, and, in surly smile,
Aim'd at contempt, but yet he hoped the while:
For as, when sinking, wretched men are found
To catch at rushes rather than be drown'd;
So on a dream our peasant placed his hope,
And found that rush as valid as a rope.
Swift fled the days, for now in hope they flea,
When a fair daughter bless'd the nuptial bed;
Her infant-face the mother's pains beguiled,
She look'd so pleasing and so softly smiled;
Those smiles, those looks, with sweet sensations moved
The gazer's soul, and as he look'd he loved.
And now the fairies came with gifts, to grace
So mild a nature, and so fair a face.
They gave, with beauty, that bewitching art,
That holds in easy chains the human heart;
They gave her skill to win the stubborn mind,
To make the suffering to their sorrows blind,
To bring on pensive looks the pleasing smile,
And *Care's* stern brow of every frown beguile.
These magic favours graced the infant-maid,
Whose more enlivening smile the charming gifts repaid.
Now Fortune changed, who, were she constant long,
Would leave us few adventures for our song

A wicked elfin roved this land around,
Whose joys proceeded from the griefs he found;
Envy his name:—his fascinating eye
From the light bosom drew the sudden sigh;
Unsocial he, but with malignant mind,
He dwelt with man, that he might curse mankind;
Like the first foe, he sought th' abode of Joy,
Grieved to behold, but eager to destroy;
Round blooming beauty, like the wasp, he flew
Soil'd the fresh sweet, and changed the rosy hue;
The wise, the good, with anxious heart he saw,
And here a failing sound, and there a flaw;
Discord in families 't was his to move,
Distrust in friendship, jealousy in love;
He told the poor what joys the great possess'd,
The great—what calm content the cottage bless'd;
To part the learned and the rich he tried,
Till their slow friendship perish'd in their pride,
Such was the fiend, and so secure of prey,
That only Misery pass'd unstung away.

Soon as he heard the fairy-babe was born,
Scornful he smiled, but felt no more than scorn:
For why, when Fortune placed her state so low,
In useless spite his lofty malace show?
Why, in a mischief of the meaner kind,
Exhaust the vigour of a rancrous mind;
But, soon as Fame the fairy-gifts proclaim'd,
Quick-rising wrath his ready soul inflamed
To swear, by vows that e'en the wicked tie
The nymph should weep her varied destiny;
That every gift, that now appear'd to shine
In her fair face, and make her smiles divine,
Should all the poison of his magic prove,
And they should scorn her, whom she sought for love.

His spell prepared, in form an ancient dame,
A fiend in spirit, to the cot he came;
There gain'd admittance, and the infant press'd
(Muttering his wicked magic) to his breast;
And thus he said:—"Of all the powers, who wait
On Jove's decrees, and do the work of fate,
Was I, alone, despised or worthless found,
Weak to protect, or impotent to wound?
See then thy foe, regret the friendship lost,
And learn my skill, but learn it at your cost.

"Know, then, O child! devote to fates severe
The good shall hate thy name, the wise shall fear;
Wit shall deride, and no protecting friend
Thy shame shall cover or thy name defend

Thy gentle sex, who, more than ours should spare
A humble foe, will greater scorn declare;
The base alone thy advocates shall be,
Or boast alliance with a wretch like thee."
He spake, and vanish'd, other prey to find,
And waste in slow disease the conquer'd mind.
Awed by the fiend's threats, and fill'd with dread,
The parents wept, and sought their infant's bed:
Despair alone the father's soul possess'd;
But hope rose gently in the mother's breast;
For well she knew that neither grief nor joy
Pain'd without hope, or pleased without alloy;
And while these hopes and fears her heart divide,
A cheerful vision bade the fears subside.
She saw descending to the world below
An ancient form, with solemn pace and slow.
"Daughter, no more be sad" (the phantom cried)
"Success is seldom to the wise denied;
In idle wishes fools supinely stay,
Be there a will, and wisdom finds a way:
Why art thou grieved? Be rather glad, that he,
Who hates the happy, aims his darts at thee;
But aims in vain; thy favour'd daughter lies,
Serenely blest, and shall to joy arise.
For, grant that curses on her name shall wait,
(So Envy wills, and such the voice of Fate,)
Yet if that name be prudently suppress'd,
She will be courted, favour'd, and caress'd.
For what are names? and where agree mankind,
In those to persons or to acts assign'd?
Brave, learn'd, or wise, if some their favourites call,
Have they the titles or the praise from all?
Not so, but others will the brave disdain
As rash, and deem the sons of wisdom vain;
The self-same mind shall scorn or kindness move,
And the same deed attract contempt and love.
So all the powers who move the human soul,
With all the passions who the will control,
Have various names—One giv'n by Truth Divine,
(As *Simulation* thus was fix'd for mine,)
The rest by man, who now, as wisdom's, prize
My secret counsels, now as art despise;
One hour, as just, those counsels they embrace,
And spurn, the next, as pitiful and base.
Thee, too, my child, those fools as Cunning fly
Who on thy counsel and thy craft rely;
That worthy craft in others they condemn,
But 't is their prudence, while conducting them

Be FLATTERY, then, thy happy infant's name,
Let *Honour* scorn her and let *Wit* defame;
Let all be true that Envy dooms, yet all,
Not on herself, but on her name, shall fall;
While she thy fortune and her own shall raise,
And decent *Truth* be call'd, and loved as, modest *Praise*.

O happy child! the glorious day shall shine,
When every ear shall to thy speech incline,
Thy words alluring and thy voice divine:
The sullen pedant and the sprightly wit,
To hear thy soothing eloquence shall sit:
And both, abjuring Flattery, will agree
That Truth inspires, and they must honour thee.

Envy himself shall to thy accents bend,
Force a faint smile, and sullenly attend,
When thou shalt call him *Virtue's jealous friend*,
Whose bosom glows with generous rage to find
How fools and knaves are flatter'd by mankind.

The sage retired, who spends alone his days,
And flies th' obstreperous voice of public praise;
The vain, the vulgar cry,—shall gladly meet,
And bid thee welcome to his still retreat;
Much will he wonder, how thou camest to find
A man to glory dead, to peace consign'd.
O Fame; he'll cry (for he will call thee Fame),
From thee I fly, from thee conceal my name;
But thou shalt say, Though Genius take his flight,
He leaves behind a glorious train of light,
And hides in vain:—yet prudent he that flies
The flatterer's art, and for himself is wise.
Yes, happy child! I mark th' approaching day.
When warring natures will confess thy sway;
When thou shalt Saturn's golden reign restore,
And vice and folly shall be known no more.
Pride shall not then in human-kind have place,
Changed by thy skill, to *Dignity* and *Grace*;
While *Shame*, who now betrays the inward sense
Of secret ill, shall be thy *Diffidence*;
Avarice shall thenceforth prudent *Forecast* be,
And bloody *Vengeance*, *Magnanimity*;
The lavish tongue shall honest truths impart,
The lavish hand shall show the generous heart,
And *Indiscretion* be, contempt of art:
Folly and *Vice* shall then, no longer known,
Be, this as *Virtue*, that as *Wisdom*, shown.
Then shall the Robber, as the Hero, rise
To seize the good that curlish law denies;
Throughout the world shall rove the generous band,
And deal the gifts of Heaven from hand to hand.

In thy blest days no tyrant shall be seen,
Thy gracious king shall rule contented men;
In thy blest days shall not a rebel be,
But patriots all and well-approved of thee.
Such powers are thine, that man by thee shall wrest
The gainful secret from the cautious breast;
Nor then, with all his care, the good retain,
But yield to thee the secret and the gain:
In vain shall much experience guard the heart
Against the charm of thy prevailing art;
Admitted once, so soothing is thy strain
It comes the sweeter, when it comes again;
And when confess'd as thine, what mind so strong
Forbears the pleasure it indulged so long?
Soft'ner of every ill! of all our woes
The balmy solace! friend of fiercest foes!
Begin thy reign, and like the morning rise!
Bring joy, bring beauty, to our eager eyes:
Break on the drowsy world like opening day,
While grace and gladness join thy flowery way;
While every voice is praise, while every heart is gay
From thee all prospects shall new beauties take,
'Tis thine to seek them and 't is thine to make;
On the cold fen I see the turn thy eyes,
Its mists recede, its chilling vapour flies;
Th' enraptured lord th' improving ground surveys,
And for his Eden asks the traveller's praise,
Which yet, unview'd of thee, a bog had been,
While spungy rushes hide the plashy green.
I see thee breathing on the barren moor,
That seems to bloom although so bleak before;
There, if beneath the gorse the primrose spring,
Or the pied daisy smile below the ling,
They shall new charms, at thy command disclose
And none shall miss the myrtle or the rose.
The wiry moss, that whitens all the hill,
Shall live a beauty by thy matchless skill:
Gale from the bog shall yield Arabian balm,
And the grey willow wave a golden palm.
I see thee smiling in the pictured room.
Now breathing beauty, now reviving bloom;
There, each immortal name 'tis thine to give,
To graceless forms, and bid the lumber live.
Should'st thou coarse boors or gloomy martyrs see,
These shall thy Guidos, those thy Teniers be.
There shalt thou Raphael's saints and angels trace,
There make for Rubens and for Reynolds place.
And all the pride of art shall find in her disgrace.

Delight of either sex! thy reign commence;
With balmy sweetness soothe the weary sense,
And to the sickening soul thy cheering aid dispense
Queen of the mind! thy golden age begin;
In mortal bosoms varnish shame and sin;
Let all be fair without, let all be calm within."
The vision fled, the happy mother rose,
Kiss'd the fair infant, smiled at all her foes,
And FLATTERY made her name:—her reign began;
Her own dear sex she ruled, then vanquish'd man;
A smiling friend, to every class she spoke,
Assumed their manners, and their habits took;
Her, for her humble mein, the modest loved;
Her cheerful looks the light and gay approved;
The just beheld her, firm: the valiant, brave,
Her mirth the free, her silence pleased the grave;
Zeal heard her voice, and, as he preach'd aloud,
Well-pleased he caught her whispers from the crowd
(Those whispers, soothing-sweet to every ear,
Which some refuse to pay, but none to hear);
Shame fled her presence; at her gentle strain,
Care softly smiled, and guilt forgot its pain;
The wretched thought, the happy found, her true,
The learn'd confess'd that she their merits knew;
The rich—could they a constant friend condemn?
The poor believed—for who should flatter them?
Thus on her name though all disgrace attend,
In every creature she beholds a friend.

REFLECTIONS.

WHEN all the fiercer passions cease
(The glory and disgrace of youth);
When the deluded soul in peace,
Can listen to the voice of truth;
When we are taught in whom to trust,
And how to spare, to spend, to give,
(Our prudence kind, our pity just,)
'T is then we rightly learn to live.
Its weakness when the body feels;
Nor danger in contempt defies;
To reason when desire appeals,
When on experience, hope relies;
When every passing hour we prize,
Nor rashly on our follies spend;
But use it, as it quickly flies,
With sober aim to serious end;
When prudence bounds our utmost views,
And bids us wrath and wrong forgive;
When we can calmly gain or lose,—
'T is then we rightly learn to live.
Yet thus, when we our way discern,
And can upon our care depend,
To travel safely, when we learn,
Behold! we're near our journey's end;
We've trod the maze of error round,
Long wand'ring in the winding glade;
And, now the torch of truth is found,
It only shows us where we stray'd:
Light for ourselves, what is it worth,
When we no more our way can choose?
For others, when we hold it forth,
They in their pride, the boon refuse.
By long experience taught, we now
Can rightly judge of friends and foes,
Can all the worth of these allow,
And all their faults discern in those;
Relentless hatred, erring love,
We can for sacred truth forego;
We can the warmest friend reprove,
And bear to praise the fiercest foe.

To what effect? Our friends are gone
Beyond reproof, regard, or care;
And of our foes remains there one,
The mild relenting thoughts to share?
Now 'tis our boast that we can quell
The wildest passions in their rage;
Can their destructive force repel,
And their impetuous wrath assuage:
Ah! Virtue, dost thou arm, when now
This bold rebellious race are fled;
When all these tyrants rest, and thou
Art warring with the mighty dead?
Revenge ambition, scorn and pride,
And strong desire, and fierce disdain,
The giant-brood by thee defied,
Lo! Time's resistless strokes have slain.
Yet Time, who could that race subdue,
(O'rpowering strength, appeasing rage,)
Leaves yet a persevering crew,
To try the failing powers of age.
Vex'd by the constant call of these,
Virtue awhile for conquest tries;
But weary grown, and fond of ease,
She makes with them a compromise:
Av'rice himself she gives to rest,
But rules him with her strict commands,
Bids Pity touch his torpid breast,
And Justice hold his eager hands.
Yet is there nothing men can do,
When chilling age comes creeping on?
Cannot we yet some good pursue?
Are talents buried? genius gone?
If passions slumber in the breast,
If follies from the heart be fled;
If laurels let us go in quest,
And place them on the poet's head.
Yes, we'll redeem the wasted time,
And to neglected studies flee;
We'll build again the lofty rhyme,
Or live, Philosophy, with thee:
For reasoning clear for flight sublime,
Eternal fame reward shall be;
And to what glorious heights we'll climb,
The admiring crowd shall envying see.
Begin the song! begin the theme!—
Alas! and is Invention dead?
Dream we no more the golden dream?
Is Mem'ry with her treasures fled?

Yes, 't is too late,—now Reason guides
  The mind, sole judge in all debate;
And thus the important point decides,
  For laurels, 't is, alas! too late.
    What is possess'd we may retain,
    But for new conquests strive in vain
Beware then, Age, that what was won,
  If life's past labours, studies, views,
Be lost not, now the labour's done,
  When all thy part is,—not to lose:
    When thou canst toil or gain no more,
    Destroy not what was gain'd before.
For, all that's gain'd of all that's good,
  When time shall his weak frame destroy
(Their use then rightly understood),
  Shall man in happier state enjoy.
Oh! argument for truth divine,
  For study's cares, for virtue's strife;
To know the enjoyment will be thine,
  In that renew'd, that endless life!

SIR EUSTACE GREY.

SCENE.—A MAD-HOUSE.

PERSONS.—VISITOR, PHYSICIAN, AND PATIENT.

VISITOR.

I 'll know no more; the heart is torn
  By views of woe, we cannot heal;
Long shall I see these things forlorn
  And oft again their griefs shall feel,
  As each upon the mind shall steal;
That wan projector's mystic style,
  That lumpish idiot leering by,
That peevish idler's ceaseless wile,
And that poor maiden's half-form'd smile,
  While struggling for the full-drawn sigh!—
I'll know no more.

PHYSICIAN.

—Yes, turn again;
Then speed to happier scenes thy way,
When thou hast view'd what yet remain
The ruins of Sir Eustace Grey,
The sport of madness, misery's prey:
But he will no historian need,
His cares, his crimes, will he display,
And show (as one from frenzy freed)
The proud lost mind, the rash-done deed.
That cell to him is Greyling Hall:—
Approach; he'll bid thee welcome there;
Will sometimes for his servant call,
And sometimes point the vacant chair,
He can, with free and easy air,
Appear attentive and polite;
Can veil his woes in manners fair,
And pity with respect excite.

PATIENT.

Who comes?—Approach!—'tis kindly done—
My learn'd physician, and a friend,
Their pleasures quit, to visit one
Who cannot at their ease attend,
Nor joys bestow, nor comforts lend,
As when I lived so blest, so well,
And dreamt not I must soon contend
With those malignant powers of hell.

PHYSICIAN.

"Less warmth, Sir Eustace, or we go."—

PATIENT.

See! I am calm as infant-love,
A very child, but one of woe,
Whom you should pity, not reprove:—
But men at ease, who never strove
With passions wild, will calmly show,
How soon we may their ills remove,
And masters of their madness grow.
Some twenty years, I think, are gone,—
(Time flies, I know not how away,)
The sun upon no happier shone,
Nor prouder man than Eustace Grey.
Ask where you would, and all would say,
The man admired and praised of all,
By rich and poor, by grave and gay,
Was the young lord of Greyling Hall.

Yes! I had youth and rosy health;
  Was noble form'd, as man might be
For sickness, then, of all my wealth,
  I never gave a single fee:
The ladies fair, the maidens free,
  Were all accustomed then to say,
Who would a handsome figure see
  Should look upon Sir Eustace Grey
He had a frank and pleasant look,
  A cheerful eye and accent bland;
His very speech and manner spoke
  The generous heart, the open hand;
About him all was gay and grand,
  He had the praise of great and small:
He bought, improved, projected, plann'd,
  And reign'd a prince at Greyling Hall.
My lady!—She was all we love:
  All praise (to speak her worth) is faint;
Her manners show'd the yielding dove,
  Her morals, the seraphic saint:
She never breath'd nor look'd complaint;
  No equal upon earth had she:—
Now, what is this fair thing I paint?
  Alas! as all that live shall be.
There was, beside, a gallant youth,
  And him my bosom's friend I had:
Oh! I was rich in very truth,
  It made me proud—it made me mad!—
Yes, I was lost—but there was cause!
  Where stood my tale?—I cannot find—
But I had all mankind's applause,
  And all the smiles of womankind.
There were two cherub-things beside,
  A gracious girl, a glorious boy,
Yet more to swell my full-blown pride,
  To varnish higher my fading joy,
Pleasures were ours without alloy,
  Nay, Paradise,—till my frail Eve
Our bliss was tempted to destroy—
  Deceived and fated to deceive.
But I deserved;—for all that time,
  When I was loved, admired, caress'd,
There was within each secret crime,
  Unfelt, uncancell'd, unconfess'd.
I never then my God address'd,
  In grateful praise or humble prayer;
And if His Word was not my jest—
  (Dread thought!) it never was my care.

I doubted:—fool I was to doubt!
If that all-piercing eye could see,—
If He who looks all worlds throughout,
Would so minute and careful be,
As to perceive and punish me:—
With man I would be great and high,
But with my God so lost, that He,
In his large view, should pass me by.
Thus blest with children, friend, and wife,
Blest far beyond the vulgar lot;
Of all that gladdens human life,
Where was the good, that I had not?
But my vile heart had sinful spot,
And Heaven beheld its deep'ning stain;
Eternal justice I forgot,
And mercy sought not to obtain.
Come near,—I'll softly speak the rest!—
Alas! 't is known to all the crowd
Her guilty love was all confess'd;
And his, who so much truth avow'd,
My faithless friend's—In pleasure proud
I sat, when these cursed tidings came;
Their guilt, their flight was told aloud,
And Envy smiled to hear my shame!
I call'd on Vengeance; at the word
She came:—Can I the deed forget;
I held the sword—the accursed sword
The blood of his false heart made wet,
And that fair victim paid her debt,
She pined, she died, she loath'd to live;—
I saw her dying—see her yet:
Fair fallen thing! my rage forgive!
Those cherubs still, my life to bless,
Were left; could I my fears remove,
Sad fears that check'd each fond caress,
And poison'd all parental love?
Yet that with jealous feelings strove,
And would at last of won my will,
Had I not, wretch! been doom'd to prove
Th' extremes of mortal good and ill.
In youth! health! joy! in beauty's pride!
They droop'd—as flowers when blighted bow;
The dire infection came:—they died,
And I was cursed—as I am now—
Nay, frown not, angry friend,—allow
That I was deeply, sorely tried;
Here then, and you must wonder how
I could such storms and strifes abide.

Storms!—not that clouds embattled make,
When they afflict this earthly globe;
But such as with their terrors shake
Man's breast, and to the bottom probe;
They make the hypocrite disrobe,
They try as all, if false or true;
For this one devil had power on Job;
And I was long the slave of two.

PHYSICIAN.

Peace, peace, my friend, these subjects fly
Collect thy thoughts—go calmly on.—

PATIENT.

And shall I then the fact deny?
I was,—thou know'st—I was begone,
Like him who fill'd the eastern throne,
To whom the Watcher cried aloud;
That royal wretch of Babylon,
Who was so guilty and so proud.
Like him, with haughty, stubborn mind,
I, in my state, my comforts sought;
Delight and praise I hoped to find,
In what I builded, planted, bought!
Oh! arrogance! by misery taught—
Soon came a voice! I felt it come;
'Full be his cup, with evil fraught,
Demons his guides, and death his doom!
Then was I cast from out my state;
Two fiends of darkness led my way;
They waked me early, watch'd me late,
My dread by night, my plague by day!
Oh! I was made their sport, their play,
Through many a stormy troubled year:
And how they used their passive prey
Is sad to tell:—but you shall hear.
And first before they sent me forth,
Through this unpitying world to run,
They robb'd Sir Eustace of his worth,
Lands, manors, lordships, every one;
So was that gracious man undone,
Was spurn'd as vile, was scorn'd as poor,
Whom every former friend would shun,
And menials drove from every door.
Then those ill-favour'd Ones, whom none
But my unhappy eyes could view,
Led me, with wild emotion on,
And, with resistless terror, drew.

Through lands we fled, o'er seas we flew
And halted on a boundless plain;
Where nothing fed, nor breathed, nor grew
But silence ruled the still domain.
Upon that boundless plain, below,
The setting sun's last rays were shed,
And gave a mild and sober glow,
Where all were still, asleep, or dead;
Vast ruins in the midst were spread,
Pillars and pediments sublime,
Where the grey moss had form'd a bed,
And clothed the crumbling spoils of time.
There was I fix'd, I know not how,
Condemn'd for untold years to stay:
Yet years were not:—one dreadful *Now*
Endured no change of night or day;
The same mild evening's sleeping ray
Shone softly, solemn and serene,
And all that time I gazed away,
The setting sun's sad rays were seen.
At length a moment's sleep stole on,—
Again came my commission'd foes;
Again through sea and land we 're gone
No peace, no respite, no repose:
Above the dark broad sea we rose,
We ran through bleak and frozen land;
I had no strength their strength t' oppose,
An infant in a giant's hand.
They placed me where those streamers play,
Those nimble beams of brilliant light;
It would the stoutest heart dismay,
To see, to feel, that dreadful sight:
So swift, so pure, so cold, so bright,
They pierced my frame with icy wound;
And all that half-year's polar night,
These dancing streamers wrapp'd me round.
Slowly that darkness pass'd away,
When down upon the earth I fell,—
Some hurried sleep was mine by day;
But, soon as toll'd the evening bell,
They forced me on, where ever dwell
Far-distant men in cities fair,
Cities of whom no travellers tell,
Nor feet but mine were wanderers there.
Their watchmen stare, and stand aghast,
As on we hurry through the dark;
The watch-light blinks as we go past,
The watch-dog shrinks and fears to bark;

The watch-tower's bell sounds shrill; and hark!
The free wind blows—we've left the town—
A wide sepulchral ground I mark,
And on a tombstone place me down.
What monuments of mighty dead!
What tombs of various kind are found!
And stones erect their shadows shed
On humble graves, with wickers bound,
Some risen fresh, above the ground,
Some level with the native clay:
What sleeping millions wait the sound,
"Arise, ye dead, and come away!"
Alas! they stay not for that call;
Spare me this woe! ye demons, spare!—
They come! the shrouded shadows all,—
'Tis more than mortal brain can bear;
Rustling they rise, they sternly glare
At man upheld by vital breath;
Who, led by wicked fiends, should dare
To join the shadowy troops of death!
Yes, I have felt all man can feel,
Till he shall pay his nature's debt;
Ills that no hope has strength to heal,
No mind the comfort to forget:
Whatever cares the heart can fret,
The spirits wear, the temper gall,
Woe, want, dread, anguish, all beset
My sinful soul!—together all!
Those fiends upon a shaking fen
Fix'd me, in dark tempestuous night;
There never trod the foot of men,
There flock'd the fowl in wint'ry flight;
There danced the moor's deceitful light
Above the pool where sedges grow;
And when the morning-sun shone bright,
It shone upon a field of snow.
They hung me on a bough so small,
The rock could build her nest no higher
They fix'd me on the trembling ball
That crowns the steeple's quiv'ring spire;
They set me where the seas retire,
But drown with their returning tide;
And made me flee the mountain's fire,
When rolling from its burning side.
I've hung upon the ridgy steep
Of cliffs, and held the rambling brier;
I've plunged below the billowy deep,
Where air was sent me to respire;

I've been where hungry wolves retire;
And (to complete my woes) I've re-
Where Bedlam's crazy crew conspire
Against the life of reasoning man.
I've furl'd in storms the flapping sail.
By hanging from the topmast-head.
I've served the vilest slaves in jail,
And pick'd the dunghill's spoil for bre-
I've made the badger's hole my bed,
I've wander'd with a gipsy crew;
I've dreaded all the guilty dread,
And done what they would fear to do.
On sand, where ebbs and flows the flood,
Midway they placed and bade me die;
Propt on my staff, I stoutly stood,
When the swift waves came rolling by;
And high they rose, and still more high,
Till my lips drank the bitter brine;
I sobb'd convulsed, then cast mine eye,
And saw the tide's re-flowing sign
And then my dreams were such as nought
Could yield but my unhappy case;
I've been of thousand devils caught,
And thrust into that horrid place,
Where reign dismay, despair, disgrace;
Furies with iron fangs were there,
To torture that accursed race,
Doom'd to dismay, disgrace, despair.
Harmless I was, yet hunted down
For treasons, to my soul unfit;
I've been pursued through many a town,
For crimes that petty knaves commit
I've been adjudged t' have lost my wit,
Because I preach'd so loud and well;
And thrown into the dungeon's pit,
For trampling on the pit of hell.
Such were the evils, man of sin,
That I was fated to sustain;
And add to all, without—within,
A soul defiled with every stain
That man's reflecting mind can pain,
That pride, wrong, rage, despair, can make
In fact, they'd nearly touch'd my brain,
And reason on her throne would shake.
But pity will the vilest seek,
If punish'd guilt will not repine,—
I heard a heavenly Teacher speak,
And felt the SUN OF MERCY shine:

hail'd the light! the birth divine!
And then was seal'd among the few;
Those angry fiends beheld the sign,
And from me in an instant flew.
Come hear how thus the charmers cry
To wandering sheep, the strays of sin,
While some the wicket-gate pass by,
And some will knock and enter in:
Full joyful 'tis a soul to win,
For he that winneth souls is wise;
Now hark! the holy strains begin,
And thus the sainted preacher cries:—
"Pilgrim, burthen'd with thy sin,
Come the way to Zion's gate,
There, till Mercy let thee in,
Knock and weep and watch and wait.
Knock!—He knows the sinner's cry:
Weep!—He loves the mourner's tears:
Watch!—for saving grace is nigh:
Wait,—till heavenly light appears.
"Hark! it is the bridegroom's voice;
Welcome, pilgrim to thy rest;
Now within the gate rejoice,
Safe and seal'd and bought and blest!
Safe—from all the lures of vice,
Seal'd—by signs the chosen know,
Bought—by love and life the price,
Blest—the mighty debt to owe.
"Holy Pilgrim! what for thee
In a world like this remain?
From thy guarded breast shall flee
Fear and shame, and doubt and pain.
Fear—the hope of Heaven shall fly
Shame—from glory's view retire,
Doubt—in certain rapture die,
Pain—in endless bliss expire."
But though my day of grace was come
Yet still my days of grief I find;
The former clouds' collected gloom
Still sadden the reflecting mind;
The soul, to evil things consign'd,
Will of their evil some retain;
The man will seem to earth inclined,
And will not look erect again.
Thus, though elect, I feel it hard
To lose what I possess'd before,
To be from all my wealth debarr'd,—
The brave Sir Eustace is no more:

But old I wax and passing poor,
Stern, rugged men my conduct view;
They chide my wish, they bar my door
'T is hard—I weep—you see I do.—
Must you, my friends, no longer stay?
Thus quickly all my pleasures end;
But I'll remember, when I pray,
My kind physician and his friend;
And those sad hours, you deign to spend
With me, I shall requite them all;
Sir Eustace for his friends shall send,
And thank their love at Greyling Hall.

VISITOR.

The poor Sir Eustace!—Yet his hope
Leads dim to think of joys again;
And when his earthly visions droop,
His views of heavenly kind remain:—
But whence that meek and humbled strain
That spirit wounded, lost, resign'd?
Would not so proud a soul disdain
The madness of the poorest mind?

PHYSICIAN.

No! for the more he swell'd with pride,
The more he felt misfortune's blow;
Disgrace and grief he could not hide,
And poverty had laid him low;
Thus shame and sorrow working slow,
At length this humble spirit gave;
Madness on these began to grow,
And bound him to his fiends a slave.
Though the wild thoughts had touch'd his brain
Then was he free:—So, forth he ran;
To soothe or threat, alike were vain:
He spake of fiends: look'd wild and wan;
Year after year, the hurried man
Obey'd those fiends from place to place;
Till his religious change began
To form a frenzied child of grace.
For, as the fury lost its strength,
The mind reposed; by slow degrees
Came lingering hope, and brought at length,
To the tormented spirit, ease:
This slave of sin, whom fiends could seize,
Felt or believed their power had end:—
"'Tis faith," he cried, "my bosom frees,
And now my SAVIOUR is my friend."

But ah! though time can yield relief,
And soften woes it cannot cure;
Would we not suffer pain and grief,
To have our reason sound and sure?
Then let us keep our bosoms pure,
Our fancy's favourite flights suppress;
Prepare the body to endure,
And bend the mind to meet distress;
And then his guardian care implore,
Whom demons dread and men adore.

THE HALL OF JUSTICE.

IN TWO PARTS.

PART I.

MAGISTRATE, VAGRANT, CONSTABLE, &c.

VAGRANT.

Take, take away thy barbarous hand,
And let me to thy Master speak;
Remit awhile the harsh command,
And hear me, or my heart will break.

MAGISTRATE.

Fond wretch! and what canst thou relate,
But deeds of sorrow, shame, and sin?
Thy crime is proved, thou know'st thy fate;
But come, thy tale!—begin, begin!—

VAGRANT

My crime!——This sick'ning child to feed,
I seized the food, your witness saw;
I knew your laws forbade the deed,
But yielded to a stronger law.
Know'st thou, to Nature's great command,
All human laws are frail and weak?
Nay! frown not—stay his eager hand,
And hear me, or my heart will break.

In this th' adopted babe I hold
With anxious fondness to my breast,
My heart's sole comfort I behold,
More dear than life, when life was blest;
I saw her pining, fainting, cold,
I begg'd—but vain was my request.
I saw the tempting food, and seized—
My infant-sufferer found relief;
And, in the pilfer'd treasure pleased,
Smiled on my guilt, and hush'd my grief.
But I have griefs of other kind,
Troubles and sorrows more severe;
Give me to ease my tortured mind,
Lend to my woes a patient ear;
And let me—if I may not find
A friend to help—find one to hear.
Yet nameless let me plead—my name
Would only wake the cry of scorn:
A child of sin, conceived in shame,
Brought forth in woe, to misery born.
My mother dead, my father lost,
I wander'd with a vagrant crew;
A common care, a common cost,
Their sorrows and their sins I knew;
With them, by want on error forced,
Like them, I base and guilty grew.
Few are my years, not so my crimes;
The age, which these sad looks declare
Is Sorrow's work, it is not Time's,
And I am old in shame and care.
Taught to believe the world a place
Where every stranger was a foe,
Train'd in the arts that mark our race,
To what new people could I go?
Could I a better life embrace,
Or live as virtue dictates? No!—
So through the land I wandering went
And little found of grief or joy;
But lost my bosom's sweet content,
When first I loved—the Gipsy-Boy.
A sturdy youth he was and tall,
His looks would all his soul declare:
His piercing eyes were deep and small,
And strongly curl'd his raven-hair.
Yes, AARON had each manly charm,
All in the May of youthful pride,
To scarcely fear'd his father's arm,
And every other arm defied.—

Oft, when they grew in anger warm,
(Whom will not love and power divide?)
I rose, their wrathful souls to calm,
Not yet in sinful combat tried.
His father was our party's chief,
And dark and dreadful was his look;
His presence fill'd my heart with grief,
Although to me he kindly spoke.
With Aaron I delighted went,
His favour was my bliss and pride;
In growing hope our days we spent,
Love growing charms in either spied,
It saw them, all which Nature lent,
It lent them, all which she denied.
Could I the father's kindness prize,
Or grateful looks on him bestow,
Whom I beheld in wrath arise,
When Aaron sunk beneath his blow?
He drove him down with wicked hand,
It was a dreadful sight to see;
Then vex'd him, till he left the land,
And told his cruel love to me;—
The clan were all at his command,
Whatever his command might be.
The night was dark, the lanes were deep
And one by one they took their way;
He bade me lay me down and sleep
I only wept and wish'd for day.
Accursed be the love he bore,
Accursed was the force he used,
So let him of his God implore
For mercy, and be so refused!
You frown again,—to show my wrong
Can I in gentle language speak?
My woes are deep, my words are strong,—
And hear me, or my heart will break.

MAGISTRATE.

I hear thy words, I feel thy pain;
Forbear awhile to speak thy woes;
Receive our aid, and then again
The story of thy life disclose.
For, though seduced and led astray,
Thou'st travell'd far and wander'd long
Thy God hath seen thee all the way,
And all the turns that led thee wrong.

PART II.

MAGISTRATE.

COME, now again thy woes impart,
Tell all thy sorrows, all thy sin;
We cannot heal the throbbing heart
Till we discern the wounds within.
Compunction weeps our guilt away,
The sinner's safety is his pain;
Such pangs for our offences pay,
And these severer griefs are gain.

VAGRANT.

The son came back—he found us wed,
Then dreadful was the oath he swore;
His way through Blackburn Forest led,—
His father we beheld no more.
Of all our daring clan not one
Would on the doubtful subject dwell;
For all esteem'd the injured son,
And fear'd the tale which he could tell.
But I had mightier cause to fear,
For slow and mournful round my bed
I saw a dreadful form appear,—
It came when I and Aaron wed.
Yes! we were wed, I know my crime,—
We slept beneath the elmin tree;
But I was grieving all the time,
And Aaron frown'd my tears to see.
For he not yet had felt the pain
That rankles in the wounded breast;
He waked to sin, then slept again,
Forsook his God, yet took his rest.—
But I was forced to feign delight,
And joy in mirth and music sought,—
And mem'ry now recalls the night,
With such surprize and horror fraught,
That reason felt a moment's flight,
And left a mind to madness wrought.
When waking, on my heaving breast
I felt a hand as cold as death:
A sudden fear my voice suppress'd,
A chilling terror stopp'd my breath—
I seem'd no words can utter how:
For there my father-husband stood.—

And thus he said:—"Will God allow,
The great Avenger just and Good,
A wife to break her marriage vow?
A son to shed his father's blood?"
I trembled at the dismal sounds,
But vainly strove a word to say;
So, pointing to his bleeding wounds,
The threat'ning spectre stalk'd away.
I brought a lovely daughter forth,
His father's child, in Aaron's bed;
He took her from me in his wrath,
"Where is my child?"—"Thy child is dead."
'Twas false—we wander'd far and wide,
Through town and country, field and fen,
Till Aaron, fighting, fell and died.
And I became a wife again.
I then was young:—my husband sold
My fancied charms for wicked price,
He gave me oft for sinful gold,
The slave, but not the friend of vice:—
Behold me, Heaven! my pains behold,
And let them for my sins suffice!
The wretch who lent me thus for gain,
Despised me when my youth was fled;
Then came disease, and brought me pain:—
Come, Death, and bear me to the dead!
For though I grieve, my grief is vain,
And fruitless all the tears I shed.
True, I was not to virtue train'd,
Yet well I knew my deeds were ill;
By each offence my heart was pain'd,
I wept, but I offended still;
My better thoughts, my life disdain'd,
But yet the viler led my will.
My husband died, and now no more
My smile was sought, or ask'd my hand,
A widow'd vagrant, vile and poor,
Beneath a vagrant's vile command.
Ceaseless I roved the country round,
To win my bread by fraudful arts,
And long a poor subsistence found,
By spreading nets for simple hearts.
Though poor, and abject, and despised,
Their fortunes to the crowd I told;
I gave the young the love they prized,
And promised wealth to bless the old;
Schemes for the doubtful I devised,
And charms for the forsaken sold.

At length for arts like these confined
In prison with a lawless crew,
I soon perceived a kindred mind,
And there my long-lost daughter knew;
His father's child, whom Aaron gave
To wander with a distant clan,
The miseries of the world to brave,
And be the slave of vice and man.
She knew my name—we met in pain,
Our parting pangs can I express?
She sail'd a convict o'er the main,
And left an heir to her distress.
This is that heir to shame and pain,
For whom I only could descry
A world of trouble and disdain:
Yet, could I bear to see her die,
Or stretch her feeble hands in vain,
And weeping, beg of me supply?
No! though the fate thy mother knew
Was shameful! shameful though thy race
Have wander'd all a lawless crew,
Outcasts despised in every place;
Yet as the dark and muddy tide,
When far from its polluted source,
Becomes more pure and purified,
Flows in a clear and happy course;
In thee, dear infant! so may end
Our shame in thee our sorrows cease!
And thy pure course will then extend,
In floods of joy, o'er vales of peace,
Oh! by the GOD who loves to spare,
Deny me not the boon I crave;
Let this loved child your mercy share,
And let me find a peaceful grave;
Make her yet spotless soul your care,
And let my sins their portion have;
Her for a better fate prepare,
And punish whom 't were sin to save!

MAGISTRATE.

Recall the word, renounce the thought,
Command thy heart and bend thy knee.
There is to all a pardon brought,
A ransom rich, assured and free;
'T is full when found, 't is found if sought,
Oh! seek it, till 't is seal'd to thee.

VAGRANT.

But how my pardon shall I know?

MAGISTRATE.

By feeling dread that 'tis not sela,
By tears for sin that freely flow,
By grief, that all thy tears are spent,
By thoughts on that great debt we owe,
With all the mercy God has lent,
By suffering what thou canst not show,
Yet showing how thine heart is rent,
Till thou canst feel thy bosom glow,
And say, "MY SAVIOUR, I REPENT!"

WOMAN!

"To a Woman I never addressed myself in the language of decency and friendship, without receiving a decent and friendly answer. If I was hungry or thirsty, wet or sick, they did not hesitate, like Men, to perform a generous action: in so free and kind a manner did they contribute to my relief, that if I was dry, I drank the sweetest draught; and if hungry, I ate the coarsest morsel with a double relish."—*Mr. Ledyard, as quoted by Mungo Parke, in his Travels into Africa.*

PLACE the white man on Afric's coast,
Whose swarthy sons in blood delight,
Who of their scorn to Europe boast,
And paint their very demons white:
There, while the sterner sex disdains
To soothe the woes they cannot feel
Woman will strive to heal his pains,
And weep for those she cannot heal:
Hers is warm pity's sacred glow;
From all her stores she bears a part,
And bids the spring of hope re-flow,
That languish'd in the fainting heart.
"What though so pale his haggard face,
So sunk and sad his looks,"—she cries;
'And far unlike our nobler race,
With crisped locks and rolling eyes:
Yet misery marks him of our kind;
We see him lost, alone, afraid;
And pangs of body, griefs in mind,
Pronounce him man, and ask our aid.
'Perhaps in some far-distant shore,
There are who in those forms delight;
Whose milky features please them more,
Than ours of jet thus burnish'd bright;

Of such may be his weeping wife,
Such children for their sire may call,
And if we spare his ebbing life,
Our kindness may preserve them all."
Thus her compassion Woman shows,
Beneath the line her acts are these;
Nor the wide waste of Lapland-snows,
Can her warm flow of pity freeze:—
"From some sad land the stranger comes,
Where joys like ours are never found;
Let's soothe him in our happy homes,
Where freedom sits, with plenty crown'd.
'T is good the fainting soul to cheer,
To see the famish'd stranger fed:
To milk for him the mother-deer,
To smooth for him the furry bed.
The powers above our Lapland bless
With good no other people know:
T' enlarge the joys that we possess,
By feeling those that we bestow!"
T'as in extremes of cold and heat,
Where wandering man may trace his kind,
Wherever grief and want retreat,
In woman they compassion find;
She makes the female breast her seat,
And dictates mercy to the mind.
Man may the sterner virtues know,
Determined justice, truth severe;
But female hearts with pity glow,
And Woman holds affliction dear;
For guiltless woes her sorrows flow,
And suffering vice compels her tear;
'T is hers to soothe the ills below,
And bid life's fairer views appear:
To Woman's gentle kind we owe
What comforts and delights us here;
They its gay hopes on youth bestow,
And care they soothe, and age they o'er.

INEBRIETY.

A POEM.

THE mighty spirit, and its power, which stains
The bloodless cheek, and vivifies the brains,
I sing Say, ye, its fiery votaries true,
The jovial curate, and the shrill-tongued shrew;
Ye, in the floods of limpid poison nurst,
Where howl the second charms like howl the first;
Say how, and why, the sparkling ill is shed
The heart which hardens, and which rules the head.
  When winter stern his gloomy front uprears,
A sable void the barren earth appears;
The meads no more their former verdure boast,
Fast bound their streams, and all their beauty lost;
The herds, the flocks, in icy garments mourn,
And wildly murmur for the spring's return;
From snow-topp'd hills the whirlwinds keenly blow
Howl through the woods, and pierce the vales below
Through the sharp air a flaky torrent flies,
Mocks the slow sight, and hides the gloomy skies;
The fleecy clouds their chilly bosoms bare,
And shed their substance on the floating air;
The floating air their downy substance glides
Through springing waters, and prevents their tides;
Seizes the rolling waves, and, as a god,
Charms their swift race, and stops the refluent flood
The opening valves, which fill the vernal road,
Thin scarcely urge along the sanguine flood;
The labouring pulse, a slower motion rules;
The tendons stiffen, and the spirit cools;
Each asks the aid of Nature's sister, Art,
To cheer the senses, and to warm the heart.
  The gentle fair on nervous tea relies,
Whilst gay good-nature sparkles in her eyes;
An inoffensive scandal fluttering round,
Too rough to tickle, and too light to wound;
Champagne the courtier drinks, the spleen to chase,
The colonel burgundy, and port his grace.
Turtle and 'rrac the city rulers charm,
Ale and content the labouring peasants warm.

O'er the dull embers, happy Colin sits,
Colin, the prince of joke, and rural wits;
Whilst the wind whistles through the hollow pane,
He drinks, nor of the rude assault complains;
And tells the tale, from sire to son retold,
Of spirits vanishing near hidden gold;
Of moon-clad imps that tremble by the dew,
Who skim the air, or glide o'er waters blue;
The throng invisible that, doubtless, float
By mouldering tombs, and o'er the stagnant moat;
Fays dimly glancing on the russet plain,
And all the dreadful nothing of the green.
Peace be to such, the happiest and the best,
Who with the forms of fancy urge their jest;
Who wage no war with an avenger's rod,
Nor in the pride of reason curse their God.
When in the vaulted arch Lucina gleams,
And gaily dances o'er the azure streams;
On silent ether when a trembling sound
Reverberates, and wildly floats around,
Breaking through trackless space upon the ear
Conclude the Bacchanalian rustic near;
O er hills and vales the jovial savage reels,
Fire in his head and frenzy at his heels;
From paths direct the bending hero swerves,
And shapes his way in ill-proportioned curves.
Now safe arrived, his sleeping rib he calls,
And madly thunders on the muddy walls;
The well-known sounds an equal fury move,
For rage meets rage, as love enkindles love:
In vain the 'wakened infant's accents shrill,
The humble regions of the cottage fill;
In vain the cricket chirps the mansion through,
'Tis war, and blood, and battle must ensue.
As when, on humble stage, him Satan light
Defies the brazen hero to the fight:
From twanging strokes what dire misfortunes rise,
What fate to maple arms and glassen eyes!
Here lies a leg of elm, and there a stroke
From ashen neck has whirl'd a head of oak.
So drops from either power, with vengeance big,
A remnant night-cap and an old cut wig;
Titles unmusical retorted round,
On either ear with leaden vengeance sound;
Till equal valour, equal wounds create,
And drowsy peace concludes the fell debate;
Sleep in her woollen mantle wraps the pair,
And sheds her poppies on the ambient air;

Intoxication flies, as fury fled,
On rooky pinions quits the aching head,
Returning reason cools the fiery blood,
And drives from memory's seat the rosy god.
Yet still he holds o'er some his maddening rule,
Still sways his sceptre, and still knows his fool;
Witness the livid lip, and fiery front,
With many a smarting trophy placed upon't,
The hollow eye, which plays in misty springs,
And the hoarse voice, which rough and broken rings:
These are his triumphs and o'er these he reigns
The blinking deity of reeling brains.
  See Inebriety! her wand she waves,
And lo! her pale, and lo! her purple slaves!
Sots in embroidery, and sots in crape,
Of every order, station, rank, and shape:
The king, who nods upon his rattle throne;
The staggering peer, to midnight revel prone;
The slow-tongued bishop, and the deacon sly.
The humble pensioner, and gownsman dry;
The proud, the mean, the selfish, and the great,
Swell the dull throng, and stagger into state.
  Lo! proud Flaminius at the splendid board,
The easy chaplain of an atheist lord
Quaffs the bright juice, with all the gust of sense,
And clouds his brain in torpid elegance;
In china vases, see! the sparkling ill,
From gay decanters view the rosy rill;
The neat-carved pipes in silver settle laid,
The screw by mathematic cunning made:
Oh, happy priest! whose God, like Egypt's lies,
At once the deity and sacrifice.
But is Flaminius then the man alone
To whom the joys of swimming brains are known
Lo! the poor toper whose untutor'd sense,
Sees bliss in ale, and can with wine dispense;
Whose head proud fancy never taught to steer,
Beyond the muddy ecstacies of beer;
But simple nature can her longing quench,
Behind the settle's curve, or humbler bench:
Some kitchen fire diffusing warmth around,
The semi-globe by hieroglyphics crown'd;
Where canvass pure displays the brass enroll'd,
Nor waiters rave, nor landlord's thirst for gold.
Ale and content his fancy's bounds confine,
He asks no limpid punch, no rosy wine;
But sees, admitted to an equal share,
Each faithful swain the heady potion bear:

Go wiser thou! and in thy scale of taste,
Weigh gout and gravel against ale and rest;
Call vulgar palates what thou judgest so;
Say beer is heavy, windy, cold, and slow;
Laugh at poor sots with insolent pretence,
Yet cry, when tortured, where is Providence?
In various forms the maid'ning spirit moves,
This drinks and fights, another drinks and loves.
A bastard zeal, of different kinds it shows,
And now with rage, and now religion glows:
The frantic soul bright reason's path defies,
Now creeps on earth, now triumphs in the skies;
Swims in the seas of error, and explores,
Through midnight mists, the fluctuating shores;
From wave to wave in rocky channel glides,
And sinks in woe, or on presumption slides;
In pride exalted, or by shame deprest,
An angel-devil, or a human-beast.
Some rage in all the strength of folly mad;
Some love stupidity, in silence clad,
Are never quarrelsome, are never gay,
But sleep and groan, and drink the night away:
Old Torpio nods, and as the laugh goes round,
Grunts through the nasal duct, and joins the sound,
Then sleeps again, and, as the liquors pass,
Wakes at the friendly jog, and takes his glass:
Alike to him who stands, or reels, or moves,
The elbow chair, good wine, and sleep he loves;
Nor cares of state disturb his easy head,
By grosser fumes, and calmer follies fed;
Nor thoughts of when, or where, or how to come
The canvass general, or the general doom
Extremes ne'er reach'd one passion of his soul,
A villain tame, and an unmettled fool,
To half his vices he has but pretence,
For they usurp the place of common sense,
To half his little merit has no claim,
For very indolence has raised his name;
Happy in this, that, under Satan's sway,
His passions tremble, but will not obey.
The vicar at the table's front presides,
Whose presence a monastic life derides;
The reverend wig, in sideway order placed,
The reverend band, by rubric statius disgraced,
The leering eye, in wayward circles roll'd,
Mark him the pastor of a jovial fold,
Whose various texts excite a loud applause,
Favouring the bottle and the good old cause,

See! the dull smile which fearfully appears,
When gross indecency her front uprears,
The joy conceal'd, the fiercer burns within,
As masks afford the keenest gust to sin,
Imagination helps the reverend sire,
And spreads the sails of sub-divine desire;
But when the gay immoral joke goes round.
When shame and all her blushing train are drown'd,
Rather than hear his God blasphemed, he takes
The last loved glass, and then the board forsakes.
Not that religion prompts the sober thought,
But slavish custom has the practice taught;
Besides, this zealous son of warm devotion
Has a true Levite bias for promotion.
Vicars must with discretion go astray,
Whilst bishops may be damn'd the nearest way;
So puny robbers individuals kill,
When hector-heroes murder as they will.
Good honest Curio elbows the divine,
And strives a social sinner how to shine;
The dull quaint tale is his, the lengthen'd tale,
That Wilton farmers give you with their ale,
How midnight ghosts o'er vaults terrific pass,
Dance o'er the grave, and slide along the grass;
Or how pale Cicely within the wood
Call'd Satan forth, and bargain'd with her blood:
These, honest Curio, are thine, and these
Are the dull treasures of a brain at peace;
No wit intoxicates thy gentle scull,
Of heavy, native, unwrought folly full:
Bowl upon bowl in vain exert their force,
The breathing spirit takes a downward course,
Or vainly soaring upwards to the head,
Meets an impenetrable fence of lead.

Hast thou, oh reader! search'd o'er gentle Gay
Where various animals their powers display?
In one strange group a chattering race are hurl'd
Led by the monkey who had seen the world.
Like him Fabricio steals from guardian's side,
Swims not in pleasure's stream, but sips the tide
He hates the bottle, yet but thinks it right
To boast next day the honours of the night:
None like your coward can describe a fight.
See him as down the sparkling potion goes,
Labour to grin away the horrid dose;
In joy-feign'd gaze his misty eyeballs float,
Th' uncivil spirit gurgling at his throat;
So looks dim Titan through a wintry scene,
And faintly cheers the woe foreboding swain.

Timon, long practised in the school of art,
Has lost each finer feeling of the heart;
Triumphs o'er shame, and, with delusive wiles,
Laughs at the idiot he himself beguiles:
So matrons past the awe of censure's tongue,
Deride the blushes of the fair and young.
Few with more fire on every subject spoke,
But chief he loved the gay immoral joke;
The words most sacred, stole from holy writ,
He gave a newer form, and call'd them wit.
Vice never had a more sincere ally,
So bold no sinner, yet no saint so sly;
Learn'd but not wise, and without virtue brave,
A gay, deluding, philosophic knave.
When Bacchus' joys his airy fancy fire,
They stir a new, but still a false desire:
And to the comfort of each untaught fool,
Horace in English vindicates the bowl.
"The man," says Timon, "who is drunk is blest,
No fears disturb, no cares destroy his rest;
In thoughtless joy he reels away his life,
Nor dreads that worst of ills, a noisy wife."
Oh! place me, Jove, where none but women come,
And thunders worse than thine afflict the room,
Where one eternal nothing flutters round,
And senseless titt'ring sense of mirth confound.
Or lead me bound to garret, Babel-high,
Where frantic poet rolls his crazy eye,
Tiring the ear with oft-repeated chymes,
And smiling at the never-ending rhymes:
E'en here, or there, I'll be as blest as Jove
Give me tobacco, and the wine I love."
Applause from hands the dying accents break,
Of stagg'ring sots who vainly try to speak;
From Milo, him who hangs upon each word,
And in loud praises splits the tortured board,
Collects each sentence, ere it's better known,
And makes the mutilated joke his own,
At weekly club to flourish, where he rules
The glorious president of grosser fools.
But cease, my Muse! of those, or these enough,
The fools who listen, and the knaves who scoff;
The jest profane, that mocks th' offended God,
Defies his power, and sets at nought his rod;
The empty laugh, discretion's vainest foe,
From fool to fool re-echoed to and fro;
The sly indecency, that slowly springs
From barren wit, and halts on trembling wings;

Enough of these, and all the charms of wine,
Be sober joys, and social evenings mine;
Where peace and reason, unsoil'd mirth improve
The powers of friendship and the joys of love;
Where thought meets thought ere words its form array
And all is sacred, elegant, and gay;
Such pleasure leaves no sorrow on the mind,
Too great to fall to sicken too refined;
Too soft for noise, and too sublime for art,
The social solace of the feeling heart,
For sloth too rapid, and for wit too high,
'Tis VIRTUE'S pleasure, and can never die!

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